

**Building Transformative Place-Making:
Lessons from Washington Hall**

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Abstract

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Transformative place-making creates more connected and equitable communities. This research advocates for more critical engagement at the building scale, which is an apt site for place-making examination and intervention. The negotiations around how a building is shared reflect dynamics that exist on larger scales. As both a place and an object, a building also provides symbolic and material benefits. Washington Hall—a historic performance and gathering space in Seattle’s Central District—offers lessons to theorists and practitioners about the challenges and opportunities facing transformative place-making projects. The case study emphasizes the importance of acknowledging and addressing race exclusion in the contextual landscape. Two approaches for forging transformative buildings are furthering counter-narratives about historically excluded communities, and crafting operations and governance models that reflect shared values and produce shared benefit.

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Chapter One: Introduction

My journey to this project

Since I can remember I've been aware of how social meaning and their consequences manifest in material space. My earliest experiences as a Filipina-white mixed race child in one of the whitest cities in the nation literally colored my spatial perceptions. I learned to evaluate places and social situations by society's racial codes and learned to "read the room" to anticipate whether or not my family or I would be considered "out of place." This experience made me acutely aware of how social beliefs and behaviors inscribe race into the landscape.

Our daily choices and movement through space make us co-creators in the persistent schema of spatial segregation. Like an orchestra made of hundreds of musicians and instruments, the accumulation of each of our choices in space—from where we live, to what route we take, to whom we say hello to on the street, from whom we cross the street to avoid—these patterns produce our common reality. As fellow geographer Richard Schein (2006, p.9) writes, "Many of us would honestly deny a racist intent in our daily activities, but the very structures of the world that we live in can make us unconsciously complicit in perpetuating processes of racialization through our interaction with and through the landscape."

My experience as a mixed-race Filipina-white woman made these dynamics obvious. It led to my work in public service and public policy, where I could attempt to mend racially driven divisions through policy reform. I worked for several years in national advocacy efforts where I supported coalition building among leaders across the Southern U.S. as far west as Texas, where racial exclusion had been structurally embedded in policy.

In this work I witnessed the spatial consequences of uneven investments on communities of color. Three years after Hurricane Katrina hit, I saw once vibrant black neighborhoods abandoned and in disrepair, whereas only a few miles away white communities had been rebuilt and rejuvenated.

I learned of federal rebuilding funds going toward a multi-million dollar port in Mississippi while poor communities lacked adequate levee systems to protect them from the next major hurricane. I learned of policy makers and developers using racial antagonism as a motivator to “clean up” undamaged public housing, which displaced thousands of New Orleanians to make way for market-rate housing (Flaherty 2010). All of these impacts disproportionately harmed communities of color. By and large, these communities were the hardest hit and the last to get help (Center for Social Inclusion 2006). This was reflected by the drastic demographic shifts in the years following the storms. In New Orleans alone, the African American population dropped from 67 percent of the city in 2000 to 59 percent in 2011 (Plyer 2013). Many of the families that left were ones with several generations of history in New Orleans. My work in the Deep South taught me lessons about how decisions around urban investment and governance were both driven by and had impacts on the racial landscape. Segregated living and social spaces drove investments in ways that ended up either ignoring the plight of or actively displacing communities of color.

Now that I have returned to my hometown of Seattle, I see similarities between what I saw in the U.S. South and the Pacific Northwest. I now see that the experiences I had as a child have been shaped by a city where racial segregation is structurally entrenched. In fact, it was a court case from Seattle that reached the U.S. Supreme Court which has effectively re-segregated public schools nationally (Richmond 2012). And yet, there lacks an honest public discussion around the disparate impact of urban renewal on communities of color in a rapidly developing city. The lack of honest dialogue around the causes and consequences of disparate racial impact in Seattle only reinforces assumptions that it is natural (McKittrick 2006, p.xv). However, both my personal and professional experiences have taught me that spatial segregation is anything but natural.

As daunting as the task seemed, I was empowered by the knowledge that just as spatial inequity has been socially constructed, it could be socially deconstructed. Discouraged by the

difficulty of impacting policy change in what had become a divisive atmosphere in national politics, I looked instead for people experimenting locally with models that created new ways of building community. I re-engaged with my childhood interest in architecture and design because they seemed like things that were tools for creating new spatial realities. As Geographer, Edward Soja (2010, p.4) states, “space as an active agent” and not just a “receptacle” of our experiences. Design seemed to offer potential to use imagination to actively restructure space.

When in 2013 I came across an innovative place-making project in Seattle—Washington Hall—I was immediately drawn to its transformative potential. Originally built in 1908 by the Danish Brotherhood as a fraternal and settlement lodge, the building had served as a performance and community gathering space for over 100 years. The hall has been home to a culturally and racially diverse set of artists, performers, and communities— from African American Jazz greats to modern dance companies to punk and hip hop shows (Washington Hall Website 2013). Most recently, a historic preservation public development authority (P.D.A.)—Historic Seattle— purchased the building from its second owners (The Sons of Haiti) and have partnered with three community-based arts and community organizations—206 Zulu, Hidmo, and Voices Rising— to rebuild the Hall which had come into deep disrepair. The collaborative effort to build upon the hall’s historic legacy as a gathering and performance space for diverse Seattle residents carried the possibility of reshaping Seattle, both literally and figuratively.

Modeling transformative place-making

The collaboration between Historic Seattle, 206 Zulu, Hidmo, and Voices Rising (collectively referred to from here on as the “project partners”) can offer lessons for what transformative place-making may look like at a building scale. I define “transformation” as that which prioritizes long-term wide-spread benefit and recognizes society’s shared fate. Following this definition, transformative approaches must also acknowledge and address how people are made disconnected

and unequal. I borrow here from Fraser's (1997, p.23) definition of transformation as, "aimed at correcting inequitable outcomes precisely by restructuring the underlying generative framework." In other words, rather than merely remedying past ills, a transformative approach would result in restructured systems that change every individual's relationship self-conception and relationship to the larger system.

For the purposes of this study, I refer to "place-making" in both its material and symbolic forms and as an entity determined by the social relations that produce it. I borrow from both Tuan's (1997) and Massey's (1994) work in defining place. Tuan (1997, p.179 and p.17) defines place as "an organized world of meaning" where human beings, "try to embody their feelings, images, and thoughts in tangible material." His humanist approach embodies both the material and immaterial attributes of place-making, one that recognizes the psychological and emotional aspects as well as the physical aspects. Massey (1994, p.154) on the other hand defines place as a locus of "a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together...." She highlights the role of social relations and groupings in place-making. Because the "constellation of social relations" is constantly in flux, this approach recognizes that place-making is in process and can be full of internal conflicts (1994, p.155).

Washington Hall is an apt case study for theorizing inclusivity in place-making because of its spatial context; it is located in Seattle's historically African American Central District (C.D.), which came about in part as a result of racially-driven disinvestment and segregation. Over the last 25 years, the C.D.'s African American population has dropped precipitously (City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development 2011).¹ This is a result of rising real estate values that have displaced former residents. The Hall seems to offer an antidote to the displacement felt by

¹ See Chapter three "Why Washington Hall" for more information.

many communities because of its mission to preserve the C.D.'s cultural legacy and remain accessible to community the local and historical community.

The project partners are presently at an important moment; they are entering the third phase of their capital campaign after having successfully raised one-third of their capital budget. They are also undergoing a strategic planning process to develop the governance, operations & finances, and interior redesign plans for the hall. Their work together offers lessons about the challenges for the future. Geographers, planners, architectural theorists, design professionals, and community advocates can all learn from these lessons about what it means to build transformative place-making.

Theoretical claims and strategic lessons

This research aims to close the gap between the theory of transformative place-making and its practice by offering both analytical tools and pragmatic applications. In this paper I use Washington Hall as a case study to make the following theoretical claims:

- 1) Analyses of transformative place-making at the building scale offer opportunities to create more inter-disciplinary dialogue between theorists and practitioners. Critical geographers have largely overlooked the scale of the building in favor of larger scales, such as cities. However the challenges posed by discussions around a building's representation, management, ownership, and design also apply at larger scales. Similarly, building professionals (contractors, architects, interior designers) and advocates actively work on the building-scale but lack the tools to address issues of justice and inclusivity. Washington Hall and other projects like it offer workable strategies for incorporating justice into place-making. This cross-disciplinary approach results in better place-making theory and practice across all fields.
- 2) Transformative place-making must acknowledge and take into account how racial exclusion has shaped a building's context. From the beginning of U.S. history, race has been an

organizing factor in the social, economic, and political life of the country (Taylor 1994; Harris 1993; Kobayashi & Peake 2000; Gilmore 2002; Wacquant 2002; Guinier & Torres 2002; Center for Social Inclusion 2006; Mckittrick 2006). And yet, it remains under-theorized in spatial justice and utopic literatures. It is also rarely considered in actual design strategies. In this paper I draw from critical race geographies to show how place-making can be race-conscious both in theory and in practice.

This study also offers the following key applications for transformative place-making:

- 1) Collaborators must both acknowledge differences as well as shared values to build a shared vision. Transformative place-making requires that groups traditionally excluded from decision-making are also part of the process. The power of collaboration is that groups can achieve greater and more meaningful influence together than they can in isolation. The challenge for is that groups are situated differently within unequal structures of access and power, and as a result, will arrive with different priorities. This is particularly true in spatially unjust landscapes. Washington Hall offers lessons about how to recognize these differences and work toward shared values, a shared vision, and workable solutions.
- 2) The larger shared vision must be incorporated into operations, governance, and a financial model that creates shared-benefit. A shared vision is materialized in place-making through the policies and practices that actualize that shared vision. In order to sustain momentum through the inherent difficulties of collaboration, the groups must stand to benefit in ways that both acknowledge their unique contributions but also goes beyond them. The transformative potential lies in the collaboration's ability to create shared-benefit for all partners through innovative models that meet their shared vision while achieving financial sustainability.

Paper overview

I start this inquiry in chapter two by situating the case study within a larger milieu of justice, utopia, social architecture, and critical race literatures. Each of these literatures offers ways to theorize transformative place-making. I draw from Soja's definition of spatial justice and Fraser's definition of distributive and recognition justice to articulate what "transformation" means at a building scale. Utopian scholarship—as offered by Harvey, Fishman, and others— represents attempts by both place-making theorists and professionals to apply notions of justice to the built environment. While this area of study provides insights into the importance of applying critical social theory to acts of place-making, it did not adequately explain the role of race in shaping space or explore the building scale. I also highlight the lack of critical social theory in the emerging fields of social architecture and "design-thinking." Lastly, I draw from critical race geographies to fill gaps in place-making literatures and attempt to explain "transformative place-making" in racially unequal contexts.

In chapter three I describe my research design and methods. This chapter also includes a description of why I chose Washington Hall as a case study and how my role and positionality impact my empirical analysis. In chapter four I draw from my empirical data (archival, participant observational, and interviews) to identify both theoretical and practical lessons for transformative place-making. To address the former, I highlight the ways that these findings contribute to or challenges the literatures cited in chapter two. To address the latter, I summarize the three primary challenges and opportunities facing the Washington Hall partners. To conclude, I share the larger lessons that this research offers to the critical geography and professional place-making fields, as well point to potential future directions of this work.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

In this chapter I will attempt to contextualize lessons offered by the case study by drawing from four broad areas of theoretical and applied work: (1) theorizations of justice, which help to define transformation as it relates to place-making, (2) utopian scholarship, which draws from past attempts at applying critical social theory to the built environment, (3) the emergent fields of “social architecture” and “design-thinking” whereby contemporary designers and thought leaders attempt to make impact in social space through design, and (4) critical race geography, which deepens a framework for transformative place-making in a larger context of spatial and racial inequities. I also signal where these literatures may connect to my empirical research on Washington Hall, and the disparities in the literatures that the empirical work addresses.

Theorizations of justice

The different ways that scholars have theorized justice helps define the meaning of “transformation” in transformative place-making. Political theorist Nancy Fraser defines two analytically distinct and inter-locking definitions of justice as redistribution and recognition. Fraser (1997, p.13) defines justice as redistribution as:

[S]ocioeconomic injustice which is rooted in the political-economic structure of society. Examples include exploitation (having the fruits of one’s labour appropriated for the benefit of others), economic marginalisation (being confined to undesirable or poorly paid work or being denied access to income-generating labour altogether), and deprivation (being denied an adequate material standard of living).

In other words, a justice of redistribution is measured primarily by socio-economic factors, such as access to capital and an ability to have agency over one’s labor. Inherent to this definition is that the current economic distribution unfairly benefits some and that economic restructuring is a necessary approach for a more just society. This approach calls for economic egalitarianism, which requires a fundamental restructuring of the political economy whereby all people have access to dignified labor, capital, and ownership. As Fraser (1997, p.15) writes, this might include:

[R]edistributing income, reorganising the division of labour, subjecting investment to democratic decision making, or transforming other basic economic structures.

Justice as recognition, on the other hand, prioritizes justice as practiced through culture and symbolism. As Fraser (1997, p.14) explains:

Here injustice is rooted in social patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication. Examples include cultural domination (being subjected to patterns of interpretation and communication that are associated with another culture and are alien and/or hostile to one's own); nonrecognition (being rendered invisible by means of the authoritative representational, communicative, and interpretative practices of one's culture); and disrespect (being routinely maligned or disparaged in stereotypic public cultural representations and/or in everyday life interactions).

Justice as recognition is measured primarily by egalitarian cultural representation, culturally inclusive communication, and being respected as a full being. On the other hand, justice as redistribution targets economic indicators while justice as recognition calls for cultural transformation—often times in language, process, or representation. This recognizes and addresses how identities and experiences have been unjustly devalued as equal. In its best form, approaches to achieving justice as recognition not only revalue identities and valorize diversity, but, as Fraser (1997, p.15) adds:

More radically still, it could involve the wholesale transformation of societal patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication in ways that would change everybody's sense of self.

How can Fraser's theory of justice apply to a building scale? A building—particularly one that is publicly accessible and historic—has the power to carry both material (distributional) and symbolic (representative) power. Materially, buildings are one aspect of a larger landscape that shapes social movements and relations; they are microcosms for larger social dynamics. At the same time, they may provide literal space for alternative social, economic, and political relationships. A building can provide a roof under which a community can come together, organize, and create. It may also offer stability, particularly for marginalized communities that live under precarious conditions. Moreover, buildings and the land they sit on carry material wealth through the financial equity that they contain and can generate.

Buildings are equally important symbolically, as people endow them with heightened social meaning (Tuan 1997). This is particularly true for historic buildings that have a history of public accessibility. As Tuan (1997, p.197) states:

The passion for preservation arises out of the need for tangible objects that can support a sense of identity....If we turn to the preservationist's reasons for wanting to maintain aspects of the past, they appear to be of three kinds: aesthetic, moral, and morale-boosting.

As Tuan confirms, the negotiations around the form and function of a historic building reflect larger debates about a society's values and self-imagination. In the case of Washington Hall, its symbolic value is derived from its history as a home to artists from a diverse array of Seattle's artistic community as well as an historic building in Seattle's rapidly gentrifying Central District. The stability represented by Washington Hall's preservation is in vivid contrast to the rapid change that surrounds it.

While it is useful to distinguish distributive and recognition forms of justice from one another, Fraser warns against interpreting them as being mutually exclusive. Rather, each works to reinforce and reflect the other. In fact, seeing injustice play out in one arena may signal injustice in the other. Further, attempts to remedy injustice in one arena without challenging the underlying systems that reproduce inequality can lead to superficial remedies at best and to reify inequality at worst. Fraser (1997, pp.25-26) offers examples of this, such as targeted public assistance programs, which can end up stigmatizing and reinforcing class differentiation (a recognition injustice).

Fraser (1997, p.23) defines remedies that do not restructure the underlying framework producing the inequalities as "affirmative" and those that do as "transformative." As she explains:

By affirmative remedies for injustice, I mean remedies aimed at correcting inequitable outcomes of social arrangements without disturbing the underlying framework that generates them. By transformative remedies, in contrast, I mean remedies aimed at correcting inequitable outcomes precisely by restructuring the underlying generative framework. The crux of the contrast is end-state outcomes versus the processes that produce them.

According to Fraser, transformative remedies are ones where everyone shares the benefits and burdens and all must fundamentally rethink their relationship to the larger system. Examples of transformative distribution remedies are universalist welfare policies, progressive taxation, and a democratically determined economic agenda (Fraser 1997, pp.24-25).

Drawing from Fraser's work, I thus define "transformation" in transformative place-making for buildings in terms of a project's ability to fundamentally restructure underlying frameworks of both distribution and recognition. This would mean that the economic and cultural/symbolic agendas of the building are co-created by people representing social difference; that the burdens and benefits are shared among project partners based on their assets and roles; and that as a result all involved would consider and alter their relationship to the "underlying framework" that creates injustice. This could be measured by the financial and social benefit a building generates, what actors are involved in decisions, who has access to the labor generated by it, and by who is telling the story of the building. Such an approach requires recognition of the shared values of all partners and a willingness to challenge their former notions of who they were and how they operated in service of a larger and collective vision. This framework is helpful when evaluating the Washington Hall case study, where questions of material benefit and ownership (distributive), and symbolic and cultural representation (recognition) are regularly at play, as I will discuss in chapter four.

Critical geographers such as Edward Soja (2010, p.70) argue for a spatial analysis of justice by highlighting, "life's fundamental spatiality...." These scholars theorize the ways that space co-constitutes power relations in social/political/economic life (Harvey 1973; Lefebvre 1991; Massey 1994; Mitchell 2003; Soja 2010). These theorizations push assumptions that life is best understood in linear, temporal, and historical terms rather than recognizing how space shapes society (Soja 1989; Soja 2010). Soja's "triple dialectic" approach emphasizes the spatial/geographic quality of human

existence alongside the social/societal and the temporal/historical forms to explain social dynamics (2010, p.71).

Soja and other critical geographers spatialize Marx's theory of historical materialism which views class inequality as a driver of history (Harvey 1984; Soja 2010). This puts class, power, and inequality at the center of their analysis, and creates what Soja (2010, p.71) calls "the omnipresence of geographically uneven development and its associated spatial inequalities." This analysis is useful to this study because it centers an awareness of spatial inequality and injustice, which is central to a full understanding of "transformative place-making." In addition, critical geographers' acknowledgement of space as both a reflection and producer of socio-history confronts fears that projects in place-making risk reinforcing harmful notions of environmental determinism.

Soja's attempts to outline characteristics of spatial justice are also relevant. He draws from David Harvey, Don Mitchell, and Mark Purcell's works to propose several key aspects, which I use to further theorize transformative place-making on the building scale (Soja 2010; Sandoval 2011). Spatial consciousness/awareness- in other words, people's understanding of the impact of space as a co-constitutor of their lives. This would require that a building's producers have a full understanding of the spatial context of the building.

Participatory democracy- this includes the participation of a variety of stakeholders. On the scale of a building, this might include mechanisms for input from various levels of stakeholders—from the builders to the users to the neighbors.

The ability of people to make material change to space- this necessitates that stakeholders would not only have broader participation in building processes, but also that they have decision-making authority over changes in material space.

Crosscutting coalitions- this translates to diverse constituencies working together for a shared goal.

In the case of a building, this would include diversity in terms of role and relationship to the building and role in the larger community context where the building exists.

These categories are useful to my analysis of Washington Hall because all of them appear prominently in the project. For one, the narrative of Hall's is highly contested given the changes in the larger context of gentrification and displacement. Second, community participation has been a primary concern of several of the anchor partners in the project. Third, the project partners' collaborative role in determining the physical changes to the building distinguishes it as a possibly transformative project. Lastly, the coalition represents a diverse cross-section of perspectives, identities, and experiences, all of which lend the project its richness. Like Fraser, Soja (2010, p. 23) argues that the diversity in the coalition offers an "inclusive and combinative rather than exclusive and narrowly channeled..." approach that opens up possibilities of new and more effective outcomes.

Where Soja's analysis falls short is, while he advocates for multi-scalar strategies, Soja only draws on examples and strategies at the neighborhood and city scales. Overlooking the building scale misses a valuable opportunity. Unlike larger scales, a building's form and function are well delineated and its physical space is finite. This can provide people a tangible sense of "spatial consciousness" and be an arena for intervention. Instead, Soja falls into the familiar pattern of turning towards conventional tactics such as community organizing and policy advocacy for spatial transformation. By failing to engage at building or block-level scales, Soja fails to engage urban and architectural design tactics and strategies for pursuing spatial justice. I engage Soja's theory at the building scale of Washington Hall to further the conversation for strategies to include spatial justice in place-making design, such as real-estate development and architecture. Doing so lends to stronger praxis in these place-making fields.

Utopian scholarship

While Soja's theories lack critical engagement with planning and architectural applications, various thinkers and planners associated with utopian scholarship have attempted to build justice into the built environment. The field of utopian scholarship emerged in the late 19th through the early 20th centuries by urban planners who proposed urban design interventions for an idealized social vision (Fishman 1977). The most notable urban planners of this genre are Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Le Corbusier, all of who attempted to address social ills with their plans for urban and rural space through planning and architecture (Fishman 1977). While their approaches and impacts varied, what united their work were urban design proposals that attempted to address social inequity and uneven power relations (Fishman 1977).

In recent years, critical urban scholars such as David Harvey (2000) have resurrected utopian scholarship because of its ability to knit a spatial justice perspective to spatially bound interventions. In *Spaces of Hope* Harvey argues that utopian scholarship offers a framework for pushing critical social theory past critique by offering solutions for a different future. Harvey (2000, p.161) promotes the idea that the imagination required to craft utopian schemes allows for a 'vast range of competing ideas about social relationships, moral orderings, political-economic systems, and the like.' This, he argues, exhibits the power of human imagination and offers us a way toward alternatives to current injustices (2000, pp.162-163).

Despite his advocacy of imagining a different future, Harvey also clearly lays out the inherent contradictions of any spatially fixed utopian undertaking. First, materializing a vision often requires negotiations and compromises with the very social processes they are meant to address. As Harvey (2000, p.173) notes:

Utopias of spatial form have been achieved through the agency of either the state or capital accumulation, with both acting in concert being the norm...[and] those who took [a path outside of mainstream social processes] typically suffered a kind of

meltdown of their principals...as they were absorbed within the mainstream of capital accumulation and the development state.

Because applying a utopian vision requires the mobilization of materials and human labor, both of which require money, what often accompanies this is a set of obligations to the very interests that utopian projects strive to escape. In other words, the contextual realities of social and economic stratification limit the implementation of utopian plans. An example of this was a compromise faced by Howard during his efforts to create the Garden City in England at the turn of the 20th century. The Garden City was supposed to provide optimal living and health standards for working people, unlike the modern industrial cities of the time (Fishman 1977, p. 73). As such, Howard was not willing to compromise on the high standard of homes in his development. The result, however, was only skilled and higher paid workers could afford the rental rates he charged to cover building costs. Consequently, factory workers ended up living in substandard housing in neighboring towns and commuted to Garden City factories (Fishman 1977, p. 73). The irreconcilable differences between ideals and fiscal realities is one faced by the Washington Hall project, which I discuss in more detail in chapter four.

Harvey (2000, pp.167-168) describes the second contradiction inherent to utopian interventions as follows: utopian visions often draw on a nostalgic and ahistorical notion of community and society. Imagining producing a different reality requires conceptualizing a reality that does not yet exist. Yet, how does one reconcile that imaginary construct with the constraints posed by the current reality? What path gets us from here to there? Connecting present reality to one's imagination of the future is often wrought with contradictions and barriers, and can end up reinforcing the very social ills it attempts to address by creating new problems.

One concept that Harvey points to is the “New Urbanism” movement, which is arguably one of the most influential in urban planning and architecture in the latter half of the 20th century (Bohl 2000). New Urbanism advocates for the reinvigoration of American communities through

dense, walkable, and mixed-use development (New Urban Communities 2008). While its intent is to create greater emphasis on local communities and civic engagement, projects done in its name often end up benefiting “those who do not need it while abandoning those that do to their ‘underclass’ fate” (Harvey 2000, p.170). This is because these schemes are often implemented with little or no attention to the socially and economically uneven geographies (Smith 2002; Day 2003; Mason & Fredericksen 2009). In fact, New Urbanism has been central to the national strategy for demolishing public housing across the country and rebuilding mixed-use higher end development in its place at the expense of poor and non-white communities (Smith 2002; Day 2004). This begs a larger question: is it possible to materialize a utopia that escapes spatial inequities marring today’s landscape?

The third contradiction Harvey outlines is that, given the chasm between where we are now and where we hope to be, any imagined proposal requires closures that prevent other possibilities from coming into being. The proposal thus poses the danger of being authoritarian. Harvey (2000, p.196) writes:

[A] stronger utopianism...[must] face up to the materialist problems of authority and closure. Closure (the making of something) of any sort contains its own authority because to materialize any one design, no matter how playfully construed, is to foreclose, in some cases temporarily but in other instances relatively permanently, on the possibility of materializing others.

While Harvey acknowledges the inherent traps of materializing designs, he argues that there is no choice but to do the work anyway, while acknowledging that it is in a constant state of revision. Harvey (2000, p.196) goes on to say, “We cannot evade such choices...the task is then to define an alternative...that is rooted in our present possibilities at the same time as points toward different trajectories for human uneven geographical developments.” In other words, the only way to attempt solutions is to discard the notion that perfection through a single remedy is possible. It is a recognition that mistakes will be made and can be addressed along the way, and that the process is

as important as the outcome. What is particularly useful about this acknowledgement is that it frees spatial theorists and designers alike from the impossible task of delivering a panacea or cure to social inequity with any one intervention. In this way, both theorists and practitioners can view their conceptions as a never-ending process of revision.

Social architecture and design-think approaches

Despite its theoretical utility, utopian scholarship fell out of favor in the planning and architecture fields with the backlash against the seemingly top-down approaches of modernism (Dutton & Mann 1996). What has taken its place is an emergent field of “social architecture” led by design professionals who attempt to incorporate social responsibility into today’s architecture education and profession (Architecture for Humanity 2013; Cary 2012). This coincides with a proliferation of “design-thinking” in business and policy circles as an approach to solving global challenges (IDEO 2013; Clinton Global Initiative 2012a; Kolawe, 2012 World Economic Forum 2012).

While these fields offer some methodological tools for people-centered design, much of the work that results from these efforts do not adequately incorporate a structural analysis of social inequity or uneven power distribution, which are central to problem-solving with marginalized people in marginalized places.² Much of what has resulted is narrow approaches to problem solving using technical and market-centered solutions aimed at addressing complex issues, some of which are actually created by the market itself. By and large, the interventions taken up by social architecture students and professionals come in the form of applying traditional methods and aesthetics to poorer people and places rather than reworking design tools for greater, structural

² One specific example of design-think’s limits is Tim Brown’s proposal to address the lack of teachers in poor and rural parts of Peru with increased government investments in technology that would stream in instruction digitally into classrooms (Clinton Global Initiative 2012b). This ignores the structural issues at play that inhibit the growth of a strong local cadre of teachers, let alone the value that in-person instruction would provide to Peruvian students.

transformation. As with Harvey's (2000) critique of New Urbanism, failing to address structurally embedded inequity can result in recreating the very problems these practitioners hope to solve.

Architectural scholars Thomas Dutton and Lian Hurst Mann (1996) contextualize this lack of social theory in the discipline by pointing to the post-modern historical moment in architectural scholarship and practice that divorced it from the political agenda of the modernist era. While Dutton and Hurst Mann call for architecture's re-engagement with a political agenda, there lacks widespread traction in the field of architecture for curriculum and case studies that adequately take social inequity into account. One exception is the scholarship of Jones and Card (2011); they advocate for a more complicated and dynamic critique of social architecture projects. They argue that current critiques tend toward one of two extremes: automatic veneration or *carte blanche* denunciation, neither of which gets us closer to structurally transformative remedies.

Others have pointed to the emergent trends of 'tactical urbanism' and 'DIY Urbanism' that call for more public participation in urban design (Hou 2010; Stickells 2011). While these trends present opportunities to restructure the orthodoxy of design from the limiting paradigm of expert (designer) and non-expert (client), there remains a lack of tools for architects and designers to meaningfully incorporate a spatial justice analysis— specifically understanding the socio-economic and political uneven landscape— into design approaches. Harvey (2000, p.200) acknowledges the need for broader participation in place-making by asking the reader to “adopt the figure of the architect as a metaphor for our own agency as we go about our daily practices and through them effectively preserve, construct, and reconstruct our life-world.” While Harvey's suggestion is more metaphorical than literal, this suggestion emphasizes the ability of all individuals to be “architects of our own fates and fortunes” (2000, p.200).

Critical Race Geographies

Race particularizes, textures, and magnifies urban inequality. However, its role remains glaringly unexamined within spatial justice literatures, utopian scholarship, and social architecture. This is true even where communities of color are the sites of inquiry or intervention. For example, in *Seeking Spatial Justice*, Soja draws heavily from case studies in Los Angeles, CA (2010). While Soja (2010, pp.121-123) does acknowledge the “cultural heterogeneity” of the city’s population, his analysis of the socio-economic stratification lacks an analysis of race as more than a demographic category. Rather, as Pulido et. al. (1996) posit, race has had an active role in shaping class inequality and the industrial landscape in Los Angeles. Similarly, in *Spaces of Hope* Harvey (2000, p.156) draws heavily from Baltimore as a case study of “degenerate utopia,” pointing to de-industrialization as a major driver of economic stratification affecting the “poor,” “marginalized,” and “blue collared workers.” What his analysis misses is how racism has contributed to white-flight driven by redlining and other government policies, which in turn increased demand for suburbanization, thus contributing heavily to Baltimore’s decline (Levine 2000). Both Harvey and Soja do what many critical scholars do: under-theorize race as merely a demographic descriptor of a broader marginalized class rather than recognizing its operational power as a driver of inequality.

Adequately theorizing spatial justice in urban and multi-racial contexts requires a full understanding of how race is more than just a demographic indicator. Rather, the way it structures social groupings, relations, and actions makes it an active agent in place-making. As Kay Anderson (1991, p.28) reiterates, “[P]erceptions [about race], in codifying the actions of individuals and institutions, have effects that become practically rooted in the external world.” How these effects structurally embed race into the urban landscape has been well documented by social scientists and advocates (Anderson 1991; Zukin 1998; Roediger 2005; Lui 2006; Center for Social Inclusion 2006; powell 2008; Lawrence 2010).

Often times, seemingly race-neutral policies end up further driving racial inequality due to the way they were implemented on top of an already racially stratified society (Lawrence 2004; Center for Social Inclusion 2006; powell 2008). For example, New Deal policies of the 1930s, such as The Social Security Act, the G.I. Bill, and the creation of the Federal Housing Authority, are credited with creating the United States' middle class. However, how these policies were designed and implemented disproportionately benefited whites (Roediger 2005; Lui 2006). This was expressed through both individual acts of discrimination and structurally embedded discrimination. In the case of the Social Security Act, the two jobs that Congress removed from the eligibility list were domestic workers and agricultural workers, rendering 65 percent of the African American workforce ineligible (Plumer 2013). In the case of the GI bill, officers of color (and women) were relegated to lower ranking positions within the armed services, making them ineligible to receive certain benefits. The Federal Housing Administration, which has underwritten over 35 million home mortgages since 1934, redlined non-white communities by labeling them as “security risks” to lenders (The Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston 2013). Because of the intergenerational impacts of these policies, the racial wealth gap between whites and people of color persists (Lui 2006).

The racial stratification that resulted from these policies and practices also take form in the built environment. Discriminatory redlining was practiced widely across the country for much of the 20th century and homeowners themselves forged racially restrictive covenants. This meant that people of color were relegated to buying homes in certain quadrants of cities. Seattle's Central District (C.D.), where Washington Hall lives is a Seattle example of this history. The C.D. was one of the only neighborhoods in Seattle where black, Asian, Native American, Latino, and at times, Jewish residents could purchase a home (Taylor 1994; Chin 2001; Silva 2009).³ Racially restrictive

³ My personal history is also implicated here. In 1978 my mother, a first-generation Filipino immigrant, was denied a home loan in the almost all-White neighborhood of Magnolia, Seattle,

covenants ensured that, as Quintard Taylor writes in *The Forging of a Black Community* (1994, pp.86-87):

Discriminatory housing patterns upheld by restrictive covenants forced virtually all Asians, Indians, and about 65 percent of the Central District's blacks to reside on the Southside (also known as lower Jackson Street), a quadrant south of downtown Seattle bounded by Yesler Hill, Beacon Hill, and an industrial and warehouse area adjacent to the harbor and Puget Sound.

As early as 1905, white homeowners attempted to prevent African-American, Asian, and Jewish residents from moving into neighborhoods (Taylor 1994). Despite its illegality, redlining and housing discrimination were documented well into the 1970s (Silva 2009). This history formed what is now understood as Seattle's historically African American neighborhood and the neighboring International District. The demographic and spatial impact of these policies is evident today. A disproportionate percentage of non-white Seattleites reside in the southeastern part of the city (Morrill 2011a).

Because racial segregation and racialized poverty have been so thoroughly embedded in urban space, it has become "inescapably normative" (McKittrick 2006, p.xv). Feminist and critical race geographer Katherine McKittrick writes in *Demonic Grounds* (2006, p.xv):

Practices of domination sustained by a unitary vantage point naturalize both identity and place, repetitively spatializing where non-dominant groups "naturally" belong. That is, for the most part, accomplished through economic, ideological, social, and political processes that see and position the racial-sexual body within what seems like predetermined, or appropriate, spaces and assume that this arrangement is commonsensical.

Here McKittrick makes clear how both the political economy and identity (of race, gender, and sexuality) play out as part of what produces and defines spatial hierarchy. That is to say, not only is

despite her qualifications. It was only after seeking the support of the Seattle chapter of the Urban League who contacted the bank on her behalf, was she approved, but at a higher percentage rate than was customary for similarly qualified buyers. It was not long before that, in 1957, that the first Filipino family purchased a home in Magnolia after a successful court case against discriminatory lending practices and neighborhood resistance.

space a backdrop for the ‘ideological order’ but a tool in creating it, and this ‘order’ is constructed by economic, political, social, and ideological processes that in turn define these identities through their fixedness in place. In this way, places themselves carry identities that people place in a hierarchy between desirable and undesirable, safe and unsafe, better and worse; these processes are rarely race-neutral. These identities carry material consequences, which in turn function to reinforce their identities.

Ignoring the way the underlying forces that embed inequality in the landscape places blame on the communities poorly positioned in the system. They obfuscate what sociologist Loïc Wacquant (2002, p.347) identifies as, “[I]he activities of dominant institutions [that] contribute powerfully to organizing the social space of the ghetto in...particularly destabilizing ways.” With this statement Wacquant asks the reader to understand poverty within the larger context that it exists. This requires acknowledging that sites of apparent dysfunction are integrally connected to the activities (policies, practices, and beliefs) of society at large. This implicates middle-class, wealthy, and white communities in the marginalization and disinvestment of poor and non-white communities. I echo Wacquant’s call for a more relational understanding of “the ghetto”, and thus the people associated with it (1997, p.344). This relational and structural understanding of race and space allows for a more nuanced approach to problem solving in those contexts. Wacquant (1997, pp.345-346) argues:

Understanding the ghetto as an institutional form, rather than as an accumulation of ‘pathology’, allows one to recognize that it does not suffer from ‘social disorganization’— a morally loaded concept...far from being disorganized, the ghetto is organized according to different principles, in response to a unique set of structural and strategic constraints that bear on the racialized enclaves of the city as on no other segment of America’s territory.

This “relational” understanding of the ghetto aligns with “transformative place-making” because it centers an awareness of the interconnections and shared fate of all communities. As Fraser explains,

transformation comes only when all involved question their relationship to and place in perpetuating injustice. It is through acknowledging interconnectedness that transformation can occur.

These scholars do an excellent job of further contextualizing racial inequality in the landscape; but they do not offer solutions or theory in place-making. Here is where re-engaging Fraser's theory of distributive and recognition justice is helpful. Fraser (1997, p.22) recognizes the duality of "race" as both a structural and representational category. She writes:

“[Race is] a bivalent mode of collectivity with both a political-economic face and a cultural-valuational face. Its two faces intertwine to reinforce each other dialectically, moreover, because racist and Eurocentric cultural norms are institutionalised in the state and the economy, and the economic disadvantage suffered by people of colour restricts their ‘voice.’ Redressing racial injustice, therefore, requires changing both political economy and culture.”

In order to arrive at a more precise definition of transformative place-making, it is useful to spatialize what “redressing racial injustice” looks like through the political economy and cultural expression of the building scale. As stated earlier, buildings contain economic value and hold cultural power. I now draw from the scholarship on race and property ownership, as well as race and cultural representation to further theorize transformative approaches at the building scale.

Building ownership is one form of economic power. A building owner can leverage value from a property by selling it or borrowing against it. The owner can also generate revenue from the building, such as charging rent for its use. Property ownership in the U.S. have historically benefited white and wealthy communities (Harris 1993; Brown 2013). For example, redlining and racially restrictive covenants systematically stripped communities of color from wealth-building opportunities over the course of the 20th century (The Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston 2013; Taylor 1994; Silva 2009; Brown 2013). Critical race scholar Cheryl Harris (1993, p.1724) documented how court cases, laws, and custom throughout U.S. history have “established whiteness as a prerequisite to the exercise of enforceable property rights.” In fact, in her article “Whiteness as Property” (1993, p.1721) she notes that the institution of slavery depended on the conflation of

whiteness and property: “[I]t became crucial to be ‘white,’ to be identified as white, to have the property of being white. Whiteness was the characteristic, the attribute, the property of free human beings.”

While race is no longer an explicit feature of property law, the effects of past exclusion from property rights are intergenerational and felt today (Lui 2006). This coincides with increased privatization of public land, as Sutton & Kemp (2006, p.2) explain:

[N]ot only do wealthy individuals and corporations hold title to an increasing amount of private land, but in years past, the poorest ethnic minority populations lost their rights to vast regions of the nation, a reality that continues to contribute to their impoverishment.

This pattern of exclusion shapes the “cornerstone of sociospatial marginality” in communities of color, which is punctuated by increased gentrification in what were once non-white neighborhoods (Sutton and Kemp 2006; Smith 2002). Over the past thirty years, cities have experienced an influx of both people and investment. This, however, has come at the expense of many residents of color and poor white residents, who cannot continue to afford the rising cost of living, as has happened in Seattle (Morrill 2011a).

The history of alienation from ownership, and then displacement from neighborhoods, shapes the Washington Hall project in various ways. For many community members, the project represents an opportunity to preserve the historical legacy and to provide accessible space for the neighborhood’s racially diverse residents. The building also represents financially productive value that can be leveraged to benefit the community in various ways (from affordable rental rates to partial ownership of the building). However, given the various legal obligations of property ownership and management (debt repayment, property taxes, maintenance, etc.), the pressures to make Washington Hall financially productive are real. How these dynamics get balanced against the collectivist ideals of its partners is a central question for the building’s long-term viability, as I explore in later chapters.

Recognizing the exclusions that have resulted from dominant practice around property ownership, Sutton & Kemp (2006) suggest a move toward collective models. Existing examples of collective forms of ownership include land trusts, community gardens, and community households. This, they argue, reframes people's idea of land and buildings as things with social value rather than merely having monetary and extractive value.

Alternative, more collective approaches are transformative because—according to Fraser's (1997, p.23) definition of the term—they “restructur[e] the underlying generative framework” of property ownership. The complexity of applying such approaches to place-making projects is that they require new and more collective governance models. They also must contend with the legal conventions that privilege individualistic forms of ownership and usually require significant financial collateral. This is a challenge faced by the Washington Hall project, which is faced with the conflicting ideas of building a mission, setting values in practice through a governance structure, and operations model that is more collective in a building that is owned by one of the project partners (Historic Seattle). There are numerous ways of reconciling the problems that arise from this model. They range from dividing up building ownership and program management to creating opportunities for anchor partners to acquire a percentage of building ownership over time. Thus far, this has proven to be a daunting challenge, as project partners are still in the process of solidifying how collective ownership would function.

Ownership of a space is not only forged through deeds; it is also reflected by the memories, symbolism, and narratives represented in and through a space. These are important for developing attachment and group and individual identity, and can also result in more material investment in a place. The power that a place can have to shaping our concept of history is also important, especially for places considered historic like Washington Hall. This power to shape our imagination about the

historical geography of the past in turn drives our imagination about the future (Hoelscher 2006). As historic cultural geographer Richard Schein (2006, p.5) writes:

[C]ultural landscapes are not simply just there as material evidence in the service of observations about human activity. Their very presence, as both material “things” and conceptual framings of the world, makes cultural landscapes constitutive of the processes that created them in the first place— whether through the materiality of the tangible, visible scene or through the symbolic qualities they embed that make them inescapably normative. Cultural landscapes are not innocent, and the duplicity of cultural landscapes means that we can, at once, study cultural landscapes as material artifacts, with traceable and documentable empirical histories and geographies, and simultaneously use cultural landscape to ask questions about societal ideas about and ideals of, in this case, race in American Life. We also can interrogate cultural landscapes as constitutive elements of those ideas and ideals.

Schein’s articulation of cultural landscapes manifesting as material “things” is one way of understanding the power of a building. This is even more so for buildings that are both considered as “material ‘things’” with symbolic power and containers of “visible scenes” of the human experience.

Memory and representation are particularly important for communities whose histories have been displaced and erased. This is especially true for historic preservation projects like Washington hall, which is imbued with particular symbolic and cultural relevance to racially and ethnically diverse communities. Schein (2006, p.10) warns that not doing so in a race-explicit way carries dangerous consequences:

“Invoking the aesthetic, through something such as historic preservation, always uses the cultural landscape in ways that have consequence, including racialized ones, beyond the intent of those involved in any particular preservation effort.”

In other words, failing to make race explicit through the symbolism and representation of preservation efforts where race has shaped the history of that place carries danger of upholding an incomplete, and thus exclusive, rendition of history. By the same token, historic preservation in these contexts creates a unique opportunity to contextualize race and exclusion in the contemporary world through learning from history that is authentic as possible.

Forging transformative place-making in spatially unjust contexts has the ability to create what geographer Steven Hoelscher calls a “counter-narrative” about place and race. Hoelscher’s (2006) defines this term in his exploration of heritage tourism in Natchez, Mississippi in “The White-Pillared Past: Landscapes of Memory and Race in the American South.” In this work, Hoelscher describes how the heritage tours of antebellum-era mansions in Natchez worked to paint a romantic picture of a bygone era of opulence and chivalry. These tours omit any mention of the history of slave and free black labor that helped to create and maintain the mansions and, more broadly, the Natchezian antebellum economy. This omission was so glaring that a group of local Natchezians produced a gospel show, *A Southern Road to Freedom*, to highlight and humanize the Black Natchezian experience in antebellum Mississippi. The producers were careful to avoid creating a “Confederate Pageantry” by illustrating the Black Natchezian experience as both one of struggle and resistance. They also connected stories of African Americans during the time of slavery to the present day through first-person narration (Hoelscher 2006). This approach reframes history as something connected to an unresolved present. As Hoelscher (2006, p.57) writes, “Unlike Natchez’s white cultural memory, with its tidy separation of past and present, black counter memory interprets history as an ongoing, unresolved process.” Connecting the black experience of the antebellum-era to the present causes viewers to confront potential discomforts and dilemmas around present day injustices.

A Southern Road to Freedom provides what Hoelscher (2006) calls a black counter-narrative to the dominant, romanticized narrative of antebellum Natchez. A counter-narrative both redresses the absence of racial histories and also relates it to the ongoing experience of these communities in their spatial contexts. This is what McKittrick (2006, p.144) characterizes as “imagin[ing] new forms of geography, [by] seeing the world from an interhuman...perspective.” Counter-narratives are one way to forge representational justice in a building where racial exclusion constitutes some of its

spatial context. This “interhuman perspective” is transformative because, borrowing from Fraser (1997), it causes everyone to fundamentally rethink themselves and their relationship to the larger system.

The Washington Hall project holds tremendous opportunity to provide a counter-narrative about race, exclusion, and resistance in Seattle. The richness of its racially and ethnically diverse history is one of the draws for community members, renters, and funders. How to tell this history, however, without potentially excluding the histories of white and mainstream arts communities in the hall—from the Danish origins to the modern dance groups—has been a debate among project partners. One of the primary challenges facing the partnership is coming to a shared narrative and shared understanding of the hall’s future role in order to promote racial justice.

The intervention this research provides

These combined bodies of work provide the scaffolding for a more grounded approach to transformative place-making; however, more empirical work is needed to both strengthen and deepen the theory in this field. As such, the primary question that this research aims to answer is: How can Washington Hall pose a new model for transformative place-making at the building scale?

The Washington Hall case study addresses this question in three primary ways. First, the theorizations of this case study ground spatial justice through an empirical example. The Washington Hall case study provides a testing ground for utopia and, as Harvey (2000, p.196) states, “defin[es] an alternative” while remaining “rooted in present possibilities.” My findings identify three primary challenges and three primary opportunities facing the project, all of which signal the need for deeper theorizations and tools for transformative place-making.

Second, the case study engages at the scale of a building where past theorizations have largely focused on urban and regional scales. As this case study shows, the building scale is often a microcosm of dynamics at work within larger scales. The challenges faced by the Washington Hall

project partners—from reconciling histories of exclusion, to coming up with a set of shared values, to confronting and working around economic limitations—are the very challenges facing joint collaborations at all scales. How the partners navigate these challenges will provide lessons for theorists and practitioners across various scales.

Third, this case study analyzes how race has functioned as an active agent in constructing spatially unjust landscapes and its ongoing impact on place-making projects. In this case study I show how systemic race exclusion has shaped the history of Washington Hall. This history has endowed the hall with both symbolic and material importance for communities of color and poor communities now displaced by gentrification. I will show how this history has shaped the motivations of community leaders in the project and informed their aspirations for what the building can become.

Research Design

This research is designed to primarily answer the following research question: How can Washington Hall pose a new model for transformative place-making at the building scale? I use a conceptually driven inductive analysis of Washington Hall as a case study to answer this question. Because Washington Hall currently functions as a collaboration among four independent organizations, a qualitative and mixed-methods approach was ideal for deriving findings. These methods include:

1) Qualitative semi-structured interviews: The unit of analysis of the interviews is individuals. The purpose of this method is to contrast the observations and analysis that I acquired through participant observation with the perspectives of individuals in the partnership. This gave me insight into how the decisions and the meetings that preceded them aligned with individuals' experiences, as well as allowing interviewees the opportunity to share their analysis of the project. Because the interviews were conducted one-on-one, they were also opportunities for interviewees to share perspectives they would not otherwise share in a group setting. To protect the identity of interviewees, I identify them in this research using pseudonyms.

2) Archival research: In order to understand the partnership's history, I conducted archival research from past documents (including memos) produced by the project. Because the project partners have been working together since 2010, and I only began to conduct participant observation starting in 2013, this archival information helped me to contextualize the project with the historical and political processes now at work that are responsible for the partnership's existence.

3) Participant observation: Because my research question aims to draw conclusions based on group processes, the unit of analysis of participant observation is the group. These observations occurred at key partnership meetings and focused on roles, relationships, practices, and dynamics. They also

focused on the decisions that were made as a result of the process— who was involved, how information was shared, and how they impacted the plan for the Hall both short and long term. Partnership representatives knew of my role as researcher and participant, and, to protect privacy, I do not attribute names to comments made in meetings by individuals.

Research Themes

This research is conceptually-driven by the literatures in chapter two. I draw directly from these literatures to form the following research themes: (1) How does Washington Hall’s spatial context shape partners’ desires to and for the building; (2) How do race and class take form in the analysis and plans for the building; (3) How do partners value both symbolic and material ownership of the building differently; and (4) What practices and mechanisms do the partners explore to operationalize transformation on a building scale? These research themes respond directly to the questions posed by the literatures and to the unanswered questions that these literatures reveal. My analysis of the case study points to more relevant theories on spatial justice, utopian place-making, and social architecture as they relate to transformative place-making on a building scale. Moreover, because this analysis also identifies challenges and opportunities in the strategy of applied place-making, this case study and others like it provide a platform for place-making thinkers and doers to engage constructively across disciplines.

Why Washington Hall

The building’s unique spatial history makes Washington Hall an ideal case study for this research. The hall is located in one of the oldest neighborhoods of Seattle: the Squire Park neighborhood in what is now called the Central District (C.D.) (MacIntosh 2002). Squire Park was originally built as a suburb of Seattle’s downtown and Capitol Hill neighborhoods. Because of racially discriminatory land use policies and practices of restrictive housing covenants, the neighboring areas—the C.D. and the International District (I.D.)— were also two of the only places

in Seattle where non-whites could live for much of the 20th century (Taylor 1994; Chin 2001; Silva 2009). Unlike in most other neighborhoods, in Squire Park residents could not get enough local agreement around instituting racially restrictive covenants in house deeds (Silva 2009). By the 1940s, African Americans and other people of color were living alongside whites in Squire Park, which has since become an official neighborhood of the C.D. (Silva 2009).

It is also important to highlight Washington Hall's location barely one mile northeast of Seattle's Chinatown/International District (I.D.). Much like most Asian enclaves across the country, Seattle's I.D. formed in what was considered an undesirable location near the railroad tracks and the original "Skid Row"—a response to racially discriminatory conventions and social dynamics (Zane 2001; Chin 2001). As a result, the main thoroughfare of the I.D. and the C.D.—Jackson Street (just two blocks south of Washington Hall)—emerged as the city's most diverse melting pot of Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, black and white residents (Taylor 1994).⁴ Black, Asian, and white business owners hosted Seattle's thriving Jazz Scene in this corridor where patrons of all races mingled (De Barros & Calderón 1993; Chin 2001; Zane 2001). In fact, some have claimed that Washington Hall hosted Seattle's first Jazz show in 1918 (Field Notes, 15 July 2013).

Washington Hall's location amidst this racially diverse geography and its unique meeting and performance spaces have made it a home for performances and community gatherings across racial and ethnic lines— from Danish immigrants, to Filipino cultural societies, to prominent Jazz legends like Billy Holiday and Duke Ellington (Haas et. al. 2012). This rich history is part of what makes it culturally significant to a diverse constituency of stakeholders.

⁴ One cannot fully capture the history of the spatial history of Washington Hall without also highlighting the fact that Seattle is built on the land of native Duwamish people. Several of the community partners have reinserted this into the public narrative of Washington Hall. While I have not encountered documentation of these histories in my research on Washington Hall, it's hard to imagine that the stories and experiences of the first Americans do not exist, interwoven into the walls of the Hall and in the memories of the landscape itself.

The Hall's physical location in a historically African-American neighborhood that is rapidly gentrifying, also makes the symbolism of its form and function particularly important. A significant number of African Americans have been displaced by rising property values in the C.D; between 2000 and 2012 the white population grew by nearly 40% in the C.D., where as the black population shrank by 35% (City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development 2011, p.23).⁵ The I.D.'s Asian immigrant population is facing similar pressures to move to suburbs where standards of living remain within their reach (Morrill 2011a). Washington Hall is also blocks from Yesler Terrace, the nation's first integrated public housing project, which is now slated for demolition, a matter of considerable controversy because original residents may get displaced in the process (Sale 2010).

Amidst these demographic and physical transformations, community organizations representing communities that have been displaced see the renovation of Washington Hall as an opportunity to preserve space and accessibility for the C.D.'s historic non-white and working-class communities. Thus, negotiations around ownership and representation of the building are intertwined with the building's physical location in "raced space." How these questions resolved in negotiations about the building's redevelopment may teach us a tremendous amount about redevelopment projects in other contexts also undergoing gentrification.

The unique set of stakeholders invested in the Hall's success also distinguishes it as an ideal case study for this inquiry. Because of the way the building's purchase came about, both historic preservation and grassroots social justice organizations have partnered in the effort (Hara Interview,

⁵ Despite the significant decline of African American's in the C.D. it still has a black population that is more than three times Seattle's average (8%). This is significant in a city with a relatively small African American population overall (City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development 2011; Turnbull and Mayo 2011). It also continues to serve as a cultural center for many of Seattle's black cultural institutions and the site of much of Seattle's African American history, including Seattle's civil rights movement.

2 April 2013).⁶ Not only are their missions and ideas diverse, but they are also racially and socio-economically diverse. This impacts various people’s relationship to the history that has shaped the building, and their desires for what it will become. Moreover, the project partners are actively engaged in a participatory process to fundraise for the building and to determine the governance, operations, and design plans of the Hall. How they navigate through these discussions will pose many challenges and present opportunities that are lessons for other place-making projects.

Study population

Because navigating the process is driven by a partnership of organizations, the representatives of these organizations serve as the study population for this research. These organizations include Historic Seattle, a historic preservation organization that owns Washington Hall, and three community-based organizations—including 206 Zulu, Hidmo, and Voices Rising—who were selected as “anchor tenants” (now referred to as “anchor partners”) for the Hall. By serving as the main decision-makers, the diversity of interests and perspectives in the partnership also reflects the diversity of interests and perspectives at stake in the city as a whole. As such, the partnership’s negotiations concerning the identity, ownership, and accessibility of the building helps illustrate broader dynamics at play.

Because the key informants are the primary active stakeholders in the project, I have intentionally chosen a purposive sample and a non-probability sampling strategy. I conducted eight interviews, which included interviews with three anchor partner leaders, three Historic Seattle staff, and two allies who were once heavily involved in the project (including partners in local government). All of these stakeholders knew of my roles as both researcher and participant.

There were three main questions answered through these interview questions. First, I asked them about their history of involvement in the project. This helped me understand their motivations

⁶ See chapter four for more on the building’s acquisition and partnership.

for participating in the project, as well understand some of the contextual challenges the project faces (community displacement, lack of affordable performance space, etc.). Secondly, I asked them what their hopes and ideas were for the project. This allowed me to identify similarities and differences between stakeholders and take inventory of potential approaches to the building's renovation and long-term design. And finally, I asked questions to about the social dynamics at play in the collaboration. This helped connect the immediate redesign process of the building to larger political, economic, and social processes that may bring out challenges to the project and exhibit similarities and differences across respondents, given their diverse life experiences and varied roles.

I obtained written consent from all interviewees. All of these interviews were recorded with a digital voice recorder and then transcribed. Interviewees had the opportunity to edit and omit any part of the transcript from the report. I also took extraordinary measures to protect the identities of all respondents and to keep interviews confidential, unless they indicated otherwise. Because of the small number of participants, this meant using pseudonyms and avoiding using identifying information such as age, race, gender, or relationship to the project where I thought it would reveal their identity. While this may rob the reader of information that can help to contextualize statements, it was more important to maintain the confidentiality of interviewees, particularly given the sensitive nature of the subject matter.

My role and positionality

The more I learned about the project, the more I became inspired by its transformative potential. Having grown up in Seattle, I was always struck by the lack of multiracial community spaces, and I wondered why that was so. I moved back to my hometown of Seattle from a racially

and culturally diverse New York City and yearned for a similar space in Seattle—not the monoculture that I remembered from my youth.⁷

My ethical perspective also drove my desire to contribute to both academia and the field through a locally based case study. I had experienced far too many times the prickly ethical dilemmas that arise when working as an “outsider” for a project. I have confronted this most acutely in places where I had no prior personal history or relationship. In these contexts I had to work hard to prove and maintain trust with local community members, which was always in danger of being revoked. This was understandable since many communities have been burned by outsiders who have benefited from the knowledge, resources, and credit of work collaboratively created and, yet, unaccountable to the local people. The hard fact of the matter was that, despite my best intentions, nothing can replace the accountability that one experiences when you have something to lose in the fight, and because I did not live in these places or have any loved ones that ever did, I could leave those projects with little material consequence to my life. These experiences shaped my intention to immerse myself in research that was in and of my local context.

My positionality, informed by my race, class, education and geographic experience, also informs my experiences and perspectives on the project. As a mixed-race, Filipina and white woman born and raised in Seattle, I empathized with the community experience of exclusion and displacement. At the same time, as someone who has navigated in middle-class and white circles because of my education, class and partially-white background, I was more or less easily able to navigate the more institutionalized white spaces (whether with funders or white project partners).

⁷ Racial heterogeneity is but one of many important visions for Washington Hall. Cultivating the arts and historic preservation are other key aims. My focus on spatial and racial justice does not mean to privilege one over other important aspects of the project. Rather, this analysis can help to deepen one of several central aspects, as well as deepen a race analysis that I believe is lacking in spatial justice theory, utopian scholarship, and social architecture practice.

Being born and raised in Seattle also gave me a deeper sense of the context and culture that shaped the project. It also made me feel more invested in and accountable in a way that would probably not have been true if I were new to Seattle. At the same time, I did not have personal or familial history in the C.D. and was learning its history and meeting the area's leadership for the first time. For these reasons, I was both an "insider" and an "outsider" on multiple fronts. While this is an experience I have navigated my entire life, it also came with its challenges. I often felt caught between very different perspectives about how the project should be run and to whom the project should be accountable. Of course, these challenges are colored by people's diverse organizational, race, and class experiences.

My unique positionality shapes my analysis around how race and class come up in place-making projects like these. It would be disingenuous to portray my analysis as divorced from my own race and class experience. I argue that this is also true for any other academic or professional working in a similar context. All too often it is those with "outsider" privilege who get to comment on, make sense of, and decide for those on the "inside." This is particularly true in acts of place-making, where professionals are thought to have the tools, relationships, and information needed to "get the job done." This often happens at the expense of genuine participation by community members, particularly those that have historically been shut out of these processes. Acknowledging my positionality, and thus my framework for interpreting this case study, is important to the inquiry of transformative place-making. As Fraser's (1997) definition of transformation suggests, such an endeavor requires that all participants acknowledge how they are positioned to larger economic, political, and social systems. It also requires that all participants be willing to re-imagine their relationship to those structures. I have done both of these things as a researcher and active participant, which has made for a more robust research endeavor.

Lastly, it is important to make clear that my dual role as both a researcher and project participant impact how I organize chapter four's findings. Because of my sense of accountability to the project and to what it is working to create, I chose to frame the empirical findings in a way that project partners may find useful—in terms of the primary challenges and opportunities facing the collaboration. Rather than focusing solely on the project's theoretical value, I chose to place greater emphasis in chapter four on lessons that the collaboration may apply in its effort. Instead, I discuss theoretical findings in the context of these lessons to more deeply understand them.

Chapter Four: Case Study and Analysis

What the case study offers

In this chapter, I draw from empirical research I conducted on the case study between Spring and Summer 2013 to address the research question: How can Washington Hall pose a new model for transformative place-making at the building scale? I answer this question by identifying three key challenges faced by the project partners and three opportunities for transformative place-making embedded in each of the challenges. These findings make four primary contributions to theories from which I have drawn.

First, the case study shows how transformative place-making must respond to the particular experiences and narratives of injustice that texture the site of intervention. In this study I show how both the experiences and narratives around racial and economic marginalization of the C.D. form a particular set of motivations and approaches of community representatives on the project. I describe these as two primary challenges for the partnership by highlighting the different uses of language in the project, and language as a reflection of the different analyses and perspectives of project partners.

Second, this study shows how the strained capacity of communities, which inhibits their participation in place-making projects, is driven by structural exclusion of poor communities and communities of color. I identify this as one of the key challenges facing the partnership.

Third, I show how transformative place-making must also take into account the need for all parties to benefit. In the case study, the benefits that each partner receives through the work bolsters the partners' ability to weather challenges.

Fourth, I identify that an operationalized utopia at the building scale must be reflected in the operations and governance of a building. As I have identified in the literature, a building has the ability to bring values of shared prosperity into physical being. I identify the need for a shared

framework among the partners based on shared prosperity and I describe what type of operations model must follow to bring shared prosperity into practice.

Before positing the four contributions, however, it is necessary to contextualize the project with additional background on the current Washington Hall partnership.

Origins of the partnership

Converging circumstances resulted in the current set of partners working to restore and revive Washington Hall. A local news source, Crosscut, published an article in 2007 about the Hall's sale and likely demolition (Kedelsky 2007). This article wrote that The Sons of Haiti (who purchased Washington Hall from the Danish Brotherhood in 1965) were unable to cover the costs of much-needed repairs, and were considering offers by developers to purchase and replace the Hall with condominiums (Kedelsky 2007). According to one of the partners (Hara Interview, 2 April 2013) I interviewed, this news "was an alarm bell to an already alarmed arts community about declining affordable and accessible space for community and cultural expression."

Several community arts activists and 4Culture (a King County-funded P.D.A. focused on arts, heritage, and preservation) became involved in the effort to save the building (4Culture 2013) and they searched for a buyer with the technical and financial capacity to save the building from demolition. Historic Seattle emerged as the best match because of its strong track record preserving historically significant buildings in Seattle (Hara Interview, 2 April 2013). Historic Seattle is both a P.D.A. and charitable foundation and has owned, preserved, and managed dozens of significant historic buildings throughout the city (Historic Seattle 2013). 4Culture also worked with Historic Seattle to protect the building by applying to the city to recognize the Hall as a historic landmark.

These negotiations took several years, during which, fortuitously for the hall, the condominium real-estate market in Seattle had collapsed. As Hara (Interview, 2 April 2013) noted, "If the market for condos had not diminished, Washington Hall would likely had been demolished

for new development.” Historic Seattle purchased the building in May 2009 using both its own capital and grants from the state and from 4Culture (Dorsey Interview, 19 June 2013).

Because the purchase of the building took several years, many of the arts organizations that originally showed interest in partnering as tenants either had found other homes or were facing leadership transitions that prevented them from signing on (Hara Interview, 2 April 2013). 4Culture played a significant role as a partner to Historic Seattle in the first years of the project to “provide assistance and leadership to help Historic Seattle build an operating model and campaign [to] ensure the space can be a vibrant, affordable, diverse, community center with a model that is self-sustaining” (Edwards and Weinheimer 2009). It was the leadership of two 4Culture staff that spearheaded the community engagement effort and the search for community partners. As Hara notes:

4Culture staff members.... were interested in the project because of its location in a changing, threatened neighborhood and petitioned for a comprehensive community engagement plan to identify possible programming or anchor partners in the project.... to serve Historic Seattle and the neighborhood. (Hara Interview, 2 April 2013)

The community engagement plan included one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders, three community-based information sessions, and attending local neighborhood meetings on gentrification (Edwards and Weinheimer 2009). The key findings of the community engagement process highlighted the need for Washington Hall to offer flexible, affordable, multi-use space, serve multiple groups (rather than one primary tenant), and serve the immediate geographical area (Central District) as well as the at-large performing arts community in Seattle.

As a result of these findings, in 2010 Historic Seattle and 4Culture launched a request for proposals to seek potential users of the building, both temporary (renters) and semi-permanent (anchor tenants). A ten-person panel of representatives with knowledge of the C.D. community, arts and culture groups, and historic preservation vetted the applications alongside Historic Seattle, who

as the building owner was to make the final decision. The panel prioritized applicants that did programming with a focus on community accessibility (particularly in the C.D. and to people of color), offered educational opportunities, and groups in need of regular access to space (Hara Interview, 2 April 2013). From the over 50 submissions, ten were identified as potential partners and four were chosen as anchor tenants. One of the organizations has since left, and three anchor organizations remain: 206 Zulu, Hidmo, and Voices Rising. In addition to eventually residing in the Hall, they were offered priority access and discounted rates for the currently usable rental spaces and a role in the renovation efforts of the building.

These three anchor organizations share some similarities. All three draw from racially and economically diverse constituencies. 206 Zulu and Voices Rising in particular have an explicit mission to “engage youth, low-income people and people of color” and “create a safe and nurturing community for LGBTQ artists of color” respectively (206 Zulu 2013; Voices Rising 2013). While Hidmo’s mission is not race and class explicit, its mission to “nurture community” through “a network of artists, educators, and activists” draws from a diverse constituency (Haas et. al. 2012). All three have curated artistic performances and cultivated community building through education.

The three organizations are also distinct in a few key ways. While their constituencies overlap, each of the organizations draws people of different age groups and focuses on different artistic genres. They also conduct their work through a diversity of forms, from curated performances, to educational programs, to community gatherings. It is also important to note that prior to relocating to Washington Hall, Hidmo was a thriving gathering place and performance venue (in the form of an Eritrean restaurant) for artists, educators, and activists in the C.D.

Since 2010, the project has grown and developed. Through a series of grants, Historic Seattle has been able to do emergency repairs to the building (including replacing a leaking roof and securing a leaning wall) that has enabled its continuous use. Historic Seattle and 4Culture crafted a

rental program and hired a rental manager for the large performance hall and lodge room. The anchor partners established a shared office in a front room of the building that is in continual use and have activated the space with their events and community relationships. All of this has allowed for continuous public use of the building and has generated revenue to pay for some of the operating expenses for the hall (such as insurance, utilities, and maintenance).

By early 2011 4Culture transitioned out of its coordinating role with Historic Seattle but continues as a funder of the project. They also supported the transition of an outside consultant to coordinate the project under Historic Seattle's management. The consultant supported regular meetings between anchor tenants and Historic Seattle staff to discuss various aspects of the building's operations and governance. This included providing feedback to the rental program, offering feedback on preliminary space planning, and providing volunteers for immediate rehabilitation efforts in the building.

By the Fall of 2011 Historic Seattle's board voted to start a large-scale capital campaign to raise \$9.8 million to fully renovate the Hall. While the two main venues are still in use, one-third of the building is in serious disrepair and needs complete renovation. That is the space that will house the anchor partner offices and additional meeting space. Two capital campaign consultants were hired to conduct the feasibility study and have continued to pursue funding from city, state, and federal government; foundations; and from other major donors. The anchor tenants have also offered significant support to fundraising efforts by meeting with funders and advocating to city and state governments for budget allocations. One-third of the capital renovation budget has been raised to date.

Over the past year, there have been two significant milestones for the Washington Hall partnership worth noting. The first is that in the early part of 2013, staff and board members of Historic Seattle and leaders of the three anchor tenants underwent an intensive race, class, and

fundraising training to build trust and a shared race and class analysis and to increase the partners' grassroots fundraising capacity. This training was led by the Social Justice Fund and occurred over the course of two months and four daylong sessions in the winter and spring of 2013. It was out of this training that the group changed the term "anchor tenants" to "anchor partners."

The second significant milestone was in Spring 2013 when a formalized shared governing structure was put into place. While there had been some attempts to formalize the agreements between organizational partnerships earlier (primarily through letters of intent), they were never finalized due to staff turnover. The lack of consensus around roles and expectations proved a constant challenge, both for ongoing governance and management of the building, and for capital campaign fundraising. To address this, Historic Seattle proposed a draft memorandum of understanding to the anchor partners that outlined intent, roles, a rental agreement, and a timeline for co-development of a long-term operations and governance plan for the building. The anchor partners responded with a proposal for co-governance in the form of a steering committee that would be tasked with (1) developing a long-term operating and governance model for the building and (2) overseeing ongoing decisions related to the operations and fundraising for Washington Hall. Historic Seattle and the anchor partners finalized the agreement in June 2013. The steering committee now meets regularly and has representatives from each of the anchor partner organizations and Historic Seattle, and operates on a consensus model of decision-making.

The following findings and analysis draw primarily from my observations and interviews conducted between April and July 2013.

Challenges

As with all collaborations, there are both benefits and challenges to working together. The opportunities for individual and shared benefit give the project its transformative potential. However, the importance of acknowledging the challenges is to identify opportunities for growth,

which can result in creative entry points for even more transformative place-making. The following are the three primary challenges faced by the partnership in the collaboration and their connections to the study's conceptual framework.

1. Deciding who benefits in a context of inequality

Washington Hall is located in an area of Seattle that has witnessed a rapid increase in land speculation and redevelopment. These trends have benefited some residents and businesses, but by and large low-income communities and communities of color have not because many have been displaced by the rising cost of living (City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development 2011). As a result, many that identify with displaced groups feel threatened by the physical and demographic transformation of the neighborhood, particularly when places that carry meaning are demolished and their neighbors unwillingly move away. This shapes the fears and drives the investment of anchor partners in Washington Hall's renovation. As one of the project partners described:

It takes a lot to step out and say we are going to put our family here....while the rest of [our] neighbors are being displaced. All my neighbors are gone. All the buildings that hold the memories that ever existed here are all gone. All my memories that I've had for the past eight years are slowly being ripped away....Like when you take someone to visit your home....this is where I went on my first date, and then this is where I graduated, where I had my first job, where different stages of my life happened. And my whole life has just disappeared and....all the people that were part of those memories are gone. And there's this glass building that has no meaning and people are eating dinner in it, and I can look inside but I can't even afford the food inside. I can't afford anything in my homeland any more. And no one is listening and nobody cares." (Siano Interview, 23 May 2013)

Siano poignantly communicates the sadness spurred on by the rapid gentrification of the C.D. over the last twenty years. The interviewee highlights how memories are embedded in space, and when the physical space changes, memories also disappear with them. This echoes Tuan's (1997, p.17 and p.179) definition of space as an "organized world of meaning" in which people "embody their feelings, imagines, and thoughts in tangible material." The transformation of the physical landscape

into “glass buildings” with “no meaning” have left many poor communities and communities of color feeling under siege.

In this context, preserving Washington Hall as a racially and economically inclusive space holds tremendous representational power and symbolic significance. Not only have the ethnically and racially diverse historic constituencies of Washington Hall been central to its public narrative, but it has also provided a platform for artists (such as the black Jazz musicians of the 1940’s) and communities (such as the Filipino social dancers) who were otherwise excluded from other venues because of racial discrimination (De Barros and Calderón 1993). As Siano explained:

[T]here was safety [at Washington Hall] versus....two blocks away....there was....gang violence, gun violence, crack epidemics that were rising, and people were trying to create art....people were always trying to create safe space where youth could come and find safety and resistance. (Siano Interview, 23 May 2013)

Siano’s perspective of Washington Hall as a site of resistance echoes Dixon, an anchor partner, who emphasizes the importance of preserving histories of resistance amidst gentrification:

[F]or historical, and cultural and social reasons, I think it’s really vital that we maintain the social presence and memory and symbol of African American presence in the Central District as gentrification goes on, because United States culture is very ahistorical, and there are people who keep repeating “that was then, this is now. We don’t need to think of that now. Things change, everything changes.” And I find that really to be a problem in terms of the culture of this country because it leaves people with no sorts of roots and no sense of history, and then people are floating and disconnected and they lose their minds and everyone says, “Why are they doing these things?” So if we can interrupt that and change the narrative, why not? (Dixon Interview, 10 July 2013)

For Dixon, gentrification has been complicit in the erasure of history that “leaves people with no sorts of roots and no sense of history.” The interviewee sees the acknowledgment of this racialized past as an opportunity to “change the narrative.”

Dixon's desire to reclaim and retell African American history in the C.D. echoes Hoelscher's (2006) identification of a "black counter memory" in Natchez, MS.⁸ This counter memory also has the ability to formulate what Hoelscher (2006, p.57) calls a "counter-narrative" that "interprets history as an ongoing, unresolved process" rather than a "tidy separation of past and present." Part of what Dixon implies with their description of people "los[ing] their minds" is that erasure robs a person of what they need to contextualize their experience, as well as the present moment. This is particularly acute for marginalized communities considered outside of the bounds of dominant and mainstream history.

Concerns over the loss of community and culture were driving forces for 4Culture's investment early on to save the building. As Hara, an ally and supporter of the project, shared:

4Culture put a huge investment and effort in the project because it was so high-risk and the focus on social justice and cultural competency [which was important] given [that the] history of the building mirrors history of the neighborhood, [also] so that it would not be a gentrification project. (Hara Interview, 2 April 2013)

In other words, the possibility that the building could provide a counter-narrative in the midst of gentrification was part of the project's foundation early on. The community that participated in the community engagement process in 2009 also advocated strongly that Washington Hall would not become a gentrification project (Edwards and Weinheimer 2009). This guided the criteria for future anchor tenants who had ties to the C.D., who focused on constituencies of color, and who prioritized community accessibility (Hara Interview, 2 April 2013). The hope was that by prioritizing the involvement of these groups, Washington Hall could provide a counter-narrative to the otherwise devastating loss of cultural memory and community in the C.D.

The recognition of Washington Hall's ability to drive a counter-narrative to gentrification is exemplary of its ability to create representative ownership for the C.D.'s historically African

⁸ See p.30

American population. Also, because of Washington Hall's existence as a site of diverse community gathering amidst this context, it also provides an educational opportunity for all who pass through its halls to learn about structural exclusion, race, and resistance through art and gathering in Seattle.

The challenge to forging this counter-narrative, however, is that Washington Hall's history includes African Americans and communities of color, but not exclusively so. It was built and owned for many years by Danish immigrants and has been home to many largely white community gatherings and performances. Centering the Hall's narrative solely in terms of racial exclusion bears the risk of excluding others who also share history in the Hall. As Dorsey, a Historic Seattle staff member, shared:

We want to keep [Washington Hall's rich history] alive. Just the diversity of users is a big number one thing to me. That it continue to be in community use and that community be broad, and reflective of the demographic changes in the Central District. I mean, the Hall has rolled through all of these changes since it's been built, so keeping that going that's a great thing, it's exciting, and I think it can contribute to making a stronger and better neighborhood by becoming that center again. (Dorsey Interview, 19 June 2013)

Dorsey does not view the demographic changes as necessarily negative, and in fact is something that the Hall "has rolled through....since it's been built." For Dorsey, restricting use of the building and its representation to a subset of the building's history limits its ability to "becom[e] that center again," particularly amidst a changing local demographic.

The differences between project partners' analysis of gentrification has made it challenging to come to a shared definition of who "the community" of Washington Hall is. Some anchor partners want to prioritize marginalized communities—particularly low-income and of color, and their white allies. As Siano articulated:

S: I think [the community for this project is] predominantly people that are marginalized people, who don't have ownership or rights....it's kind of the community in the Central District, and I would say, like activating black people, immigrant folks, that are low-income, that are first, second generation, they are actually gathered and use art as a celebratory tool.

Interviewer: Are white people part of the community?

S: Um, yes, because they have been historically part of the Central District that had been in alliance with the different racialized communities that were historically zoned to be here. The reason they gathered though is because there was racism that still exists today and because there was zoning....[Washington Hall] was the only place they could gather when there was curfews.... (Siano Interview, 23 May 2013)

Siano views the identity of Washington Hall as a home for artists and communities who have been historically excluded from mainstream, white, institutions. In the larger context of exclusion (redlining and racial curfews) Washington Hall has been “a survival mechanism” and “mode of resilience” (Siano Interview, 23 May 2013). For Siano, part of what makes the hall special is its use as a site of artistic expression and gathering place.

This view is not necessarily shared by Historic Seattle, who both want to preserve its use and accessibility by communities represented by the anchor partner groups, but also remain accessible more broadly. As Dorsey stated:

It needs to be [the anchor partners'] place and their home and it also needs to be shared more broadly, and it needs to be open but how do you do that without, you know....how do you balance it so you're not stepping on the toes of people who are trying to work there....so it's something we're going to take on as a challenge, to balance the needs to have it widely used in the community but also a secure home to the people who have invested in it. I think we can do that, I don't feel it's hopeless but I do think it's going to be a shared learning experience. (Dorsey Interview, 19 June 2013)

Dorsey highlights the need for balancing these visions, and how project partners do so will need to be reflected in the Hall’s mission, operating model, and governance model. This is a theme I will explore further later in this chapter.

2. The need for a shared language and framework

The way that different people and different organizations in the project understand the history of the C.D. also shows up in the use of language—what words are used and what they mean. How the use of language differs between organizations illustrates the different analyses that each brings to the project.

One example was the use of the term “anchor tenant” to describe the community partner organizations. The term “anchor tenant” is standard nomenclature in real estate development and is used by Historic Seattle to mean semi-permanent renters of their properties. Because Historic Seattle’s organizational model is as a PDA, the landlord-tenant model is used across projects. Several of the anchor partner organizations, however, felt strongly against the historical connotations that it implied. As Siano explained:

[T]here are people in the anchor groups, the first thing questioned is the meaning of the word tenants. That’s like the roots of slavery. There’s all these other implications of being called a tenant that was not even part of this privileged mindset.... It’s like no, we’re partners and this has historical implications right off the bat, you know. (Siano Interview, 23 May 2013)

Here Siano explains that for some of the anchor partners, the word “tenant” carries connotations of a time in history when African Americans were exploited for their labor. They also felt it did not acknowledge their bigger role as contributors to the project. As a result, several of the community representatives requested that the name be changed to “anchor partners” in Spring 2013.⁹ While this shift to “anchor partners” works to reframe the relationship between the community organizations and Historic Seattle, the ongoing challenge is to reflect the “partnership” in the governance and operations of the hall. I discuss this further in the opportunities section below.

Another example of where different perspectives and language have arisen is in how the project is described to others outside of the partnership. Because the partnership is engaged in a capital campaign, funders are one audience for these descriptions. As Dixon described:

D: There’s this tremendous history of racism, but it manifests in these strange ways, like the way that the language was included in one document that said, “The Central

⁹ Another example of differing definitions of language was during negotiations to create a steering committee for the project. The draft proposal included a provision for a “secretary” for the committee that would perform administrative duties. One of the anchor partners suggested that the term be changed to “administrator” because of how “secretary” conjured histories of women and their work getting undervalued in the workplace.

District is a historically African American District” and by the next document it’s changed to, “the historically multiracial Central District”....

Interviewer: So you think that by omitting that word, by changing that word, then it erases a particular history or depoliticizes it?

D: It does, to make it more comfortable for someone. That’s how I feel. I feel Seattle’s racism is very what’s comfortable for people. And this might be for the funder....but then this is how history is changed and how lies creep into history. (Dixon Interview, 10 July 2013)

For Dixon, the omission of the word “African American” is reflective of a larger pattern of omission and “Seattle’s racism” which is partly driven by “what’s comfortable for people.” Whether or not the change in language was an intentional effort by the author to depoliticize the project (although both statements “historically African American” and “multiracial” are factual), the anchor partners and community members’ fear of historic erasure is real. It is reflective of the larger trauma from displacement that exists in the geographic context of the Hall.

These differences between the language and analyses of the anchor partners and Historic Seattle is a result of their different organizational models, constituencies, and historical relationship to the C.D. Historic Seattle is a P.D.A. whose constituencies are defined by their interests in historic preservation and real estate development. As Historic Seattle staff member, Vu, explained:

I think our traditional constituencies are coming from different places, and Historic Seattle has not done as much direct community outreach as our partners. (Vu Interview, 8 July 2013)

Here Vu is referring to the fact that Historic Seattle’s main role is preserving historically significant buildings. While they do also have members and provide educational programming on historic architecture in Seattle, Vu draws a distinction between Historic Seattle’s programming and the “direct community outreach” of anchor partner organizations. By stating that Historic Seattle’s traditional constituencies “are coming from different places” Vu alludes to the different geographical and demographic characteristics of Historic Seattle’s constituencies from the constituencies of anchor partners. It is probably safe to assume that their constituency tends to draw from a whiter, middle to upper income, and older crowd. On the other hand, the anchor partners are all

community-based social justice focused, and their constituencies tend to draw from communities of color and whites with a social justice framework. Many of their constituencies and allies have or continue to live in the C.D.

Because of these differences, the organizations have different relationships to the project and the larger community within which it lives. These differences are reflected in language, but more importantly they can act as barriers to building trust and rapport between project partners. As Dixon shared:

We come from very different worlds....Seattle you can live in a totally white world....and you can stay just within your own class. And so, those things are present. And then on the other side, people can be very mistrustful of people because there's so different, so from both sides. So, I'd say we are all products of our society....(Dixon Interview, 10 July 2013)

Here Dixon recognizes the role that historic segregation has played in fostering mistrust and unfamiliarity between white and non-white groups. Dixon also acknowledges that the mistrust is “from both sides,” and describes how the race and class experiences of people within the partnership impact the comfort level and trust factors between collaborators.

The larger context of structural inequality has shaped both the lack of familiarity with low-income communities and communities of color by historically white organizations and the mistrust by these communities of these more institutionalized organizations. Wacquant calls for a more “relational understanding” of inequity would mean that all partners acknowledge their position to the broader context of structural inequality.¹⁰ It also requires that, regardless of each partner's position in the larger structure, that they are willing to see and acknowledge the fears and needs of other partners and that they problem solve across differences. This is a shared responsibility, regardless of each partners' position to the broader context of inequality. The Social Justice Fund training in the Spring of 2013 provided an opportunity for this shared analysis and trust-building.

¹⁰ See p.25.

However, given how structurally embedded this history is, it will require on-going and long-term trust building between the partners and the co-development of a shared purpose, analysis, and language.

The challenge of the need for a shared analysis across constituencies is missing from the place-making literatures I have drawn from. This is particularly essential for any utopian endeavor that hopes to materialize an alternative vision for the future. Building a shared-benefit model is one way to minimize the danger of authoritarianism that Harvey (2000) warns against. The more that any place-making proposal can reflect the collaboration and unity of its constituents, the less authoritarian it becomes.

3. Collaborating across uneven capacity and resources

The third challenge for the future of the Hall is the uneven distribution of capacity and resources across collaborating organizations. The three anchor partner organizations were chosen from over fifty applications because their missions and constituencies were a great match for the project (Hara Interview, 2 April 2013). However, they are organizations that have historically operated on small budgets and are almost exclusively operated by volunteers. So, whereas Historic Seattle has the ability to offer both volunteered staff and board time and paid staff time, the anchor partners depends solely on the volunteer efforts of their leadership. Because many of the organizational leaders have full time employment elsewhere, it has limited their ability to fully participate in the project's governance and to launch programming. As Dixon shared:

Interviewer: What would sustainability look like or include at Washington Hall?

D: Funding. Funding to support programming and to support the people doing the work. I don't know, but I think that that would be really helpful. So here's funding to do the daycare center, here's funding to do programming, here's funding to do office hours, let's set up this coffee shop, you know, so there's been a lot of funding to help the physical plan but not to help the conceptual plan, or the aspirational plan.... It comes down to physical realities and physical needs of people to survive. So when people have other work they can't be at the hall. So that's difficult for me. (Dixon Interview, 10 July 2013)

Here Dixon expresses the difficulty of contributing fully to the project because of the lack of funds that exist to support programming in the Hall. Dixon also highlights the contradiction between fundraising millions of dollars for the capital improvements of the Hall while the programming—which drives the narrative for the capital improvement of the Hall—remains sorely under-resourced. This is a structural challenge within the fields of philanthropy and government, whereby capital funding is often divorced from programmatic investments that give purpose to physical infrastructures.

The anchor partners' limited resources also inhibit their use of rental space within the Hall. Despite discounted rental rates to the large meeting and performance venues, they are still cost-prohibitive for anchor partner organizations and other community groups. In addition, the Hall is being booked up to six months in advance, which limits use by community groups who do their planning only one or two months in advance. However, Historic Seattle currently depends on the venue rentals to cover the costs of the building's operations. This is difficult to balance, as project ally Harper described:

The idea that there's a huge tension around cost, and cost of living, and cost of space, is always present. Particularly in communities that are historically underinvested and particularly in communities where there is an inequitable distribution of power, relative to capital and resources. I am impressed with the fact that that is on the table in this project more than it is in most cases, and someone has to pay the electric bill, because the city doesn't give free electricity to anybody. (Harper Interview, 7 April 2013)

Here Harper recognizes the history of underinvestment and uneven power distribution harming “particular communities” while still acknowledging the need to cover costs. This dilemma mirrors others that utopian place-makers have had to confront, including in Ebenezer Howard's work on

the Garden Cities (Fishman 1977).¹¹ The compromises that Howard and the Washington Hall project partners face may be inevitable. As Harper shared:

[T]he money has to come from somewhere. It could come from a wealthy donor or the government or foundations or individual renters or the community itself, but the building costs money to both rehab and maintain and operate and that does have to come from somewhere...if it gets into a model where everything is dependent on external financial subsidies than you are beholden to whatever that resource is...the money always has to come from somewhere and they have to show their bottom line to their board of directors or whatever it is that governs their work. (Harper Interview, 7 April 2013)

Harper makes clear how all funds come with strings attached. The question for any utopian endeavor like this one is, then, which compromises is the group willing to make in order to achieve its long-term vision?

The under-resourced nature of the anchor partner organizations is, in part, reflective of the disinvestment in these communities more broadly. The percentage of philanthropic dollars targeting organizations to do “community engagement” and “community organizing” is a small percentage of funding priorities (Cohen 2012). Further, often times these organizations do not have the relationships in philanthropy that their white-led counterparts have, or simply lack the time or knowledge to navigate philanthropic fundraising.

The Hall itself offers an opportunity to find untraditional solutions to this historic gap. These would come in the form of creative approaches to fundraising and to the building’s design and operation that resource both the programmatic work of anchor partners and meet Historic Seattle’s need to cover ownership and maintenance costs. The Social Justice Fund training, which established an Anchor Partner Investment Fund through community donations, offers one innovative approach. However, the economic model for the building will also have to reconcile these needs.

¹¹ Refer to p.18 for a description of Howard’s compromise.

I now turn to the three primary opportunities embedded within each of these challenges.

Opportunities

1. The project meets partners' self-interests

Each of the four organizations has gained tangible benefit from partnering with one another on the Washington Hall project. For the anchor partner organizations, one of the most immediate benefits has been access to reliable and affordable meeting and event space. As Dixon shared:

[W]e always had to sort of, jump through hoops to use those other spaces, whether going through applications or paying this or that, so we thought that it would be amazing to have a base to do regular programming, and to do different programming. (Dixon Interview, 10 July 2013)

Oza, another anchor partner, shared similar sentiments, reflecting on the over two years they have concentrated programming at the Hall:

Having a central space has been pivotal to our organization's growth. We've had places to convene and do things but not necessarily as a base of operations, so it's been very pivotal to our growth. Just to have space for storage, files, and meeting spaces. You know, to have a secured space for meetings, spaces where we can designate times, and convene. And also just the venue, you know there are a lot of different things that we do here and that the community does with various multifaceted events and conferences and benefits and drives and galleries and all types of stuff. (Oza Interview, 10 June 2013)

The stable presence of Oza's organization in the C.D. is particularly significant considering the context of displacement that many of their members and the larger community have experienced.

For the anchor partners, Washington Hall offers the opportunity to create a stable and "creative home" for their communities and work (Dixon Interview, 10 July 2013). In fact, their use of

Washington Hall has inspired other community organizations across the country to seek permanent spaces, as Oza explained:

Other cities, other communities in other places, just to be here and to physically breath the energy here is great inspiration. I think that people can learn a lot, you know, from this story...There have been folks from all over the country that come and for them to come in here and to see the space and to feel the energy and the historical significance of it, is real powerful and profound...Just to see that it is

possible...Actually some of the other chapters have been looking into their communities for what opportunities and spaces they might be able to [make] some sort of community owned space. (Oza Interview, 10 June 2013)

So, not only are the anchor partners benefiting from its stable “creative home,” but so are other organizations nationally. Oza notes the significance of the Hall’s historical significance to inspire imagination, which lends to its symbolic and representative power.

In addition to stable access to space, collaboration on Washington Hall has given the anchor partners a new platform to imagine new collaborative programming and fundraising. One of the anchor partners joined the project precisely for the opportunity to “collaborate with other like-minded people to do progressive cultural programming in Seattle” (Dixon Interview, 10 July 2013). One example of collaboration has been the formation of an Anchor Partner Investment Fund that came out of the Social Justice Fund training. The group—which included anchor partner representatives and Historic Seattle staff and board—decided that the money raised through grassroots effort, would fund investments in the building that all anchor partner organizations’ and their communities could utilize. While the fundraising campaign for this fund is slated to last only two to three months, the group has explored the possibility of creating a permanent Anchor Partner Investment Fund and ongoing collaborative fundraising (Field Notes, April 20 2013). These funds could support both the programming and capital improvements necessary for the organizations’ to meet their missions in Washington Hall.

Historic Seattle has also benefited greatly from collaborating with anchor partner organizations on Washington Hall. One of the most tangible areas where they have benefited is their ability to raise capital funds for the hall’s physical renovation. As Dorsey explained:

No one funds a building that doesn't have a use, so I think the fact that we have a viable use, it's being used even while it's being renovated, is really positive. If we had an empty building and we were going around saying we think this could be something, I doubt that we would get a lot of support. But with (a) the partnerships that we've established and (b) the rental program that shows that there is a need and that the building meets those needs, and (c) as a way to engage young people and

others in a much needed community center, that's all visible, so that makes it more attractive to fund. (Dorsey Interview, 19 June 2013)

The anchor partners have a role to play in all the three areas Dorsey identified, thus contributing to Historic Seattle's fundraising success.

Anchor partners have also particularly contributed to Historic Seattle's ability to raise capital funds with certain government agencies. This is because several of the anchor partner leaders have experience with community organizing, and have large and politically active bases of community support. This has been helpful when trying to catch the attention of elected officials who are compelled by community needs and where community involvement is an explicit grant requirement for public funds.

The project has also given Historic Seattle an opportunity to expand beyond its traditional constituencies. As Vu shared:

And I think one of the positive things around this partnership at Washington Hall is that it challenges Historic Seattle to take another look at the demographics of our membership and who is attending our events and who is benefiting from our educational programs. (Vu Interview, 8 July 2013)

From Vu's perspective, partnering with the anchor partner organizations gives Historic Seattle an opportunity to appeal to a more diverse demographic. Because of the collaborative model, the project also provides the organization with a chance to meet its mission in historic preservation using a different operations model. If proven sustainable, this could translate to different approaches in other areas of Historic Seattle's work.

The benefits that all four organizations have gained from the collaboration help to sustain the work's momentum with a shared commitment to the process in the face of challenges. Moreover, how each of the four organizations are evolving in their scope and approach is part of what makes Washington Hall a transformative project. Each of them is approaching their mission in new and innovative ways. Yet, there lacks an acknowledgment of the importance of individual

benefit in utopian, social architecture, and spatial justice literatures. This is a key consideration for this case study and for place-making theory and strategies.

2. Forging a narrative based on shared values

More than what each organization individually gains from the project, what they are building together forges the narrative of shared benefit that could become a compelling example of transformative place-making. This narrative is based on shared values of community benefit and stewardship that all of the partners share. As Vu articulated:

V: I think on a big, philosophical level, they're very, very compatible. I think sometimes we get bogged down in the minutiae of little differences but on the big vision I think they're really well aligned.

Interviewer: What would be the words you would use to describe their alignment?

V: I think they place a high value on community, and on opportunities for cultural connection to the past; certainly those are values that they hold above profit making, but also above other priorities...And also, I sense that everyone involved believes that the physical place itself, where history and social change has happened, is important. And we all believe that there's something that we gain from having that physical place our lives. Our partner groups, I think, all feel a connection to Washington Hall that they may not feel to a new building that didn't have that sort of legacy. So I guess those are some things that they have in common. (Vu Interview, 8 July 2013)

Here Vu identifies that all partners share a commitment to place and to community through stewardship of a building that connects us to the past. Vu also highlights how all partners feel connected to Washington Hall because, as an old building, it carries a legacy that carries power. Washington Hall represents history through its physical form and its symbolic presence in the collective imagination of the community. This bolsters Tuan's (1977, p.179) description of space as an "organized world of meaning" and mirrors Fraser's (1997) work on the significance of recognition justice. The connection to history drives many of the partners' involvement in the project. As Oza confirmed:

I would really like to see this place flourish as a community space, which it's always been. You know, it's not different from the early 1900's and mid 1900's. It's just a part of the lineage. And we're all here on shared ground and shared time, so this is just a blessing to be a part of this legacy and in terms of, I guess, the grander

vision...instead of trying to get caught up or bent out of shape, [I] try to focus on [what] we can control, because there's a lot of it we can, and a lot of it we're aspiring to move towards that it just takes time and energy to cultivate. (Oza Interview, 10 June 2013)

As Oza's quote makes clear, the historic legacy of Washington Hall as a community space lends the project the hope and responsibility of fulfilling a "grander vision" that supersedes individual groups' disagreements. The shared commitment to community space and the history of the Hall can be a tool for reminding them that, even through the difficulties of collaboration, their endeavor is a long-term one that contributes to a larger social purpose. This finding contributes to utopian, social architecture, and justice theories by highlighting the important role that narratives, shared purpose, and historical legacies can play in place-making projects.

Their shared commitment also lends itself toward a socially and culturally sustainable model of historic preservation. As Vu stated:

I think that Washington Hall is such a good example of social and cultural sustainability...In preservation, a lot of times you get the environmental and economic piece okay, but you don't always have the social/cultural continuity and sustainability, for example when gentrification occurs. And this is actually a case where you have all three legs, and a really strong example of a sustainable project. (Vu Interview, 8 July 2013)

Vu highlights the opportunity that the Washington Hall collaboration provides to doing what "in preservation a lot of times...you don't always have..." This is because of the collaborative nature of the project, whereby community stakeholders have partnered with the historic preservation building owner.

Drawing from the theory, a socially and culturally strong model of preservation could offer counter-narratives that would, as Hoelscher (2006, p.57) describes, present history as an ongoing and unresolved process. This model of preservation would also need to include the active participation of historic communities in place-making. This could take the form of contributing histories to the project and having say in how it is incorporated into the building, or providing them

services that meets their ongoing needs. This community-centered approach addresses two of Soja's (2010) characteristics of spatial justice: participatory democracy and the ability of people to make material changes to a space.

3. Modeling shared-benefit

The project's ability to practice transformative place-making in an ongoing way depends on its ability to craft an economic model that is both aspirational and sustainable. This economic model needs to balance the desire of the anchor partners and community to preserve accessibility, especially for those historically disadvantaged, with Historic Seattle's need to cover costs owning and operating costs (utilities, staff time, maintenance, and debt services).

Currently, the revenue generated from the rental program covers the majority of the Hall's operating costs. Historic Seattle currently covers the windfall by revenue generated at its other properties. Solely depending on revenues of the two venue spaces creates pressure on the rental program to maximize revenue. This results in pressures to raise rental rates and fill the calendar up to six months in advance, which inadvertently poses barriers for anchor partner organizations and other community groups to use the venues when they are unavailable or when the rates are cost-prohibitive. Historic Seattle has instituted policies to increase accessibility, such as counting work-trade hours by anchor partners toward discounted rentals rates. However, this does not relieve the pressure on the rental program to fully cover operating expenses, and limits community use of the building.

Because one-third of the building is still inoperable and awaiting renovation, there is tremendous potential for additional revenue sources that may both relieve pressure from the two main venue rentals to cover operating costs, while increasing community accessibility of the space. Ideas include finding additional tenants who would lease office or classroom space long-term or

creating a “hot seat” office where individuals could pay by the day or hour to access office and classroom space (Field Notes, 29 July 2013).

The build-out of the additional areas of the hall also present opportunities for anchor partners to generate revenue for their programming, either by renting out spaces that they manage (like a recording studio or commercial kitchen) or by offering services to renters (such as catering) or to the community at large (such as childcare) (Field Notes, 29 July 2013). In addition, building additional shared spaces, like flexible offices and classrooms, may enable anchor partners to individually and collaboratively apply for grants to do youth arts programming. Funders have already shown interest in supporting youth-focused programming because of the identified need for such programs in the neighborhood.

One way the partners’ has already modeled generating creative revenue was the birth of the Anchor Partner Investment Fund in Spring 2013. This came out of the grassroots fundraising training provided by the Social Justice Fund. This collective pot of funds could pay for investments in the Hall that benefit anchor partner improvements to the building and programming. By soliciting donations of all amounts from the broader community, it also expands and deepens community investment in the building. Doing this also honors and employs the strong relationships that many marginalized communities have formed in the face of hardship. As Siano shared:

Interviewer: how do you see your vision for the hall...lending to its financial sustainability?

S: Because people will pay for that. There are people that will contribute to that. There are people that are waiting to give. And also by documenting volunteer hours, that’s another way to make money by saying....this is a [match], in regards to grants.

Interviewer: So it’s that people will give because they believe in it and people will use it because they believe in the mission, and also through grants?

S: Yea, and it’s networking. Through networks, you never know who people know.....people are on the mode of survival, that’s how they know so many people. Because they had no way of surviving by themselves, so they had to reached out and beyond themselves for themselves and their communities to survive. And so through that, the people that are involved that have no money have abundance in the sense of community resources, and government officials listen to them. (Siano Interview, 23 May 2013)

Here Siano points out that even though many of their constituencies are considered under-capitalized, they are rich in relationships. For Washington Hall to successfully leverage community support, it will need to incorporate non-traditional fundraising strategies, such as through peer-to-peer fundraising. As Siano noted, community-based approaches also strengthens traditional fundraising efforts to gain government support because “government officials listen to them.”

Community-based fundraising efforts can also lead to roles for community constituents in the Hall’s governance, which lends to its potentially transformative model. Soja (2010) includes “participation in decision-making” as one of the key characteristics of spatial justice. Similarly, Fraser (1997) includes representation in decision making as a necessary strategy for achieving justice.

While much of what I have described thus far creates shared-benefit through the internal programming of the Hall, partners are also considering how to structure long-term ownership of the building in ways that achieves shared-benefit. Historic Seattle is required to own the building for at least 15 more years because of preservation funds they have received from the state for the building’s rehabilitation. What the ownership model for the building looks like after that point has yet to be decided. The groups may decide to structure a model of shared-ownership, mirroring other cooperatively owned real estate such as co-ops or land trusts. This has been advocated by some of the anchor partners who express interest in eventual co-ownership. As Oza described:

I think [we] came into this project knowing it’s going to be a long term project and we would only be a part of this if it was something that we would be [in] for the long haul. That’s why we’ve endured all this uncertainty in the last three to four years and just working minimally with what’s available. But we’re not scared of the idea of ownership or anything like that. These numbers that are perceivable high, like raising millions, it’s a big aspiration but nonetheless it’s possible. If we let fear of not having money dictate how we move than we would pretty much always be at square one. (Oza interview, 10 June 2013)

Other anchor partners, however, have expressed that long-term use of the space and their role in governance would be enough to feel “ownership” in the building. In such a scheme, ownership can

be achieved symbolically through shared governance and benefit of the building. This is an approach that Historic Seattle has successfully forged at another of its properties in Seattle.

If anchor partners are to gain an eventual stake in the real-estate of Washington Hall, the partnership will have to confront the challenge that the three anchor partners currently do not have the resources or organizational infrastructures necessary to take that on. This is partly a result of the historical and structural barriers that have inhibited these organizations and their constituencies from developing equity. However, it is a challenge they will have to creatively overcome if they hope to gain partial ownership of the building. One creative approach could be to create a process whereby anchor partners could gain a vested share of the equity over time based on their contributions (monetary and otherwise) to the project.

Despite the decisions around long-term ownership, the partners' immediate decisions around the Hall's operations and governance build toward long-term possibility. These must incorporate strategies for shared benefit in order to meet the varying needs of project partners. Harper explained that they need to look beyond traditional governance and operations structures to do so. As Harper stated:

I think Washington Hall should do something that no one has done before. I think that it can and I hope that it will...if it's going to either be a market rate rental space or a traditional nonprofit arts center I don't think it's going to work, because I don't think either of those models are viable for the kind of project that it is. So it has to be some new adaptive version of that. Which is totally possible. (Harper Interview, 7 April 2013)

As Harper makes clear, Washington Hall's "new adaptive version" could not meet its mission if it solely functioned like a for-profit rental spaces because it would not meet its mission as a community-accessible arts and gathering space. Alternatively, relying on philanthropic and government grants, as traditional nonprofits do, would risk its financial sustainability and, as Harper (Harper Interview, 7 April 2013) stated, "if it gets into a model where everything is dependent on external financial subsidies than you are beholden to whatever that resource is." Rather, a "new

adaptive version” of Washington Hall would both create financial and social sustainability for the partners and its target constituencies. What makes this “new adaptive version” transformative is its ability to empower partners and its constituents. As Harper articulated:

All of the partners— Historic Seattle, all of the anchor tenants, anyone who feels invested in the project- should own the fact that this project has to be economically viable because otherwise it’s charity and this project isn’t about charity, it’s about empowerment, and that’s where it can be a different model (Harper Interview, 7 April 2013)

The distinction that Harper draws between charity and empowerment mirrors Fraser’s distinction between affirmative and transformative strategies and makes clear what gives Washington Hall transformative potential. As Fraser (1997, p.23) explains, while affirmative remedies are “aimed at correcting inequitable outcomes of social arrangements without disturbing the underlying framework that generates them,” transformative remedies “correc[t] inequitable outcomes precisely by restructuring the underlying generating framework.” This is where creative revenue generation and revenue-sharing between Historic Seattle and anchor partners provides a truly transformative model of place-making.

The project’s ability to transform lies not only in its future potential, but also through the relationships that have already formed among the partner organizations. As Dixon explained:

[I] think that the project is very transformative and very innovative in the combinations of these peoples who maybe would have never have worked together, and now are working to create something that doesn’t exist.... I mean even the approach, the design of it isn’t like anything else. So already it’s transformative in that way. It’s not for profit or just a solo endeavor, which is....we’re very trained for that. So in that way it’s a radical project, and it’s a deserving project. (Dixon Interview, 10 July 2013)

Dixon points to the innovative partnership and their bravery to “create something that doesn’t exist” as evidence of transformation. More than just the building itself, the new relationships built through it are also part of what constitute place-making (Massey 1994).

As I have demonstrated above, each of the challenges that the partnership faces also comes with unique opportunities to model strategies for transformative place-making. The building and the partnership offer a way to align across a set of shared values despite the structural inequity that has, in the past, excluded people. Moreover, the building offers opportunities to create shared benefit in ways that bolsters the capacity of all groups to participate in bringing these values to life.

While many of the plans for the Hall's long term operations and governance have yet to solidify, the project partners' attempt toward aspirational possibility creates new openings for things yet imagined. As Harvey (2000, p.196) reiterates, the project of utopia building is to "define an alternative...rooted in our present possibilities," while recognizing that the solutions are in a constant state of revision.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Contributions of this work

This inquiry contributes both to place-making theory and to place-making practice through the following claims:

1. The building is an ideal scale for theorizing and practicing transformative place-making.

As this study has exhibited, what happens at the building scale is often reflective of the social processes occurring on larger scales. The challenges faced by the Washington Hall partners—from reconciling histories of exclusion, to crafting a shared set of values, to materializing these values in operations and governance practices—are the very challenges facing collaborations at larger scales.

At the same time, a building is an apt testing ground for forging utopias because it requires both visioning and applications of the vision. As Tuan (1977, p. 106) articulates:

Building is a complex activity. It makes people aware and take heed at different levels: at the level of having to make pragmatic decisions; of envisioning architectural spaces in the mind and on paper; and of committing one's whole being, mind and body, to the creation of a material form that captures an ideal.

Here Tuan explains that inherent to the act of building is both imagining what is possible and negotiating how to bring those ideas into being. As such, it is a scale that lends to greater interdisciplinary engagement between place-making theorists and professionals. At the same time, place-making practitioners would benefit from the process by gaining a framework for understanding their spatial—and thus economic, political, and social— impact on society.

Buildings carry symbolic power. Often times they are ascribed with social meaning that impact place-making strategies. However, place-making fields would benefit from more theorizations around how social meaning of buildings relate to histories of injustice and what strategies point toward different material realities.

2. Transformative place-making requires that both theorists and professionals understand how racialized structural exclusion shapes sites of intervention.

As I have explained in this study, race is not just another demographic category to describe cultural differences. Rather, policies and practices around race have actively structured spatial exclusion. This pattern of exclusion has impacts on communities today. In the Washington Hall case study, how this took form was in the different language and analyses used to describe “the community,” and in the limited capacity and resources available for anchor partner programming and community engagement.

Further, racial exclusion operates at the building scale through both material and symbolic processes. I borrow from critical race scholars to identify strategies that address this at the building scale. These include distributive remedies, such as collective ownership models, and representative remedies, such as counter-narratives about space and race. In order for theorists and practitioners to engage in truly transformative place-making in racially unjust contexts, they must explore these alternative methods.

3) Transformative place-making is operationalized through a shared set of values and a model of shared benefit. Two key findings that emerged from the empirical research were that a shared set of values and a model that creates shared benefit are necessary ingredients for transformative place-making. These findings address the primary research question that I proposed at the beginning of this paper: how can Washington Hall pose a new model for transformative place-making at the building scale? The case study shows how its shared values— centered on community over economic profit and the stewardship of history— offer a platform for trust and coalition-building across differences. Further, operations models that create shared economic and social benefit carry the most promise to address limited funding for programming and community engagement and to ensure broad community investment in the Hall’s future success. In order to achieve this over the

long term, Washington Hall and projects like it also need to have a governance structure that ensures shared accountability. As Harper explained:

I do think that if Historic Seattle and the partners can build a governance model that honors the contributions and the value that everyone brings to the table- the social, political, and economic capital that everyone brings- if you can find a way to share that power around a collective vision, than it absolutely can be successful and it can be a game changer and that is super exciting. (Harper Interview, 7 April 2013)

Washington Hall is one case study that offers potential positive directions toward shared economic and social benefit, as well as shared accountability.

Limitations and implications

While Washington Hall offers important and instructive lessons for transformative place-making, it is only one place, limited by its nuances. Its particularities—such as its location in a gentrifying urban U.S. neighborhood, its historic use as a multiracial artistic and gathering space, and the unique collaboration that has come together to rebuild it—all shape my contributions in ways that may not be applicable elsewhere. More empirical research drawing from more places in different kinds of buildings is needed.

Secondly, because of the phase of work that the project was in when I conducted my research, I was not able to incorporate more specific lessons related to the operations, governance, and design approaches that the partners are currently shaping for the Hall. As they move forward with these areas of focus, the Hall may offer innovative methods for design professionals or more fodder for theorists in their attempts at defining what transformation looks like at the building scale. This holds potential for future research, either on this particular case study or on other case studies like it.

Final thoughts

I came to this project with a desire to contribute to transformative work. It has enabled me to straddle my academic pursuits with my commitment to its “real world” applications. My hope is that this research provides a thought-provoking analysis by illustrating how academic theory enriches our doing and applied work enriches our knowing. In fact, as Harvey (2000, p.196) reminds us, “we cannot evade such choices.” It is only through our many, ever-evolving and revised attempts that we can aspire to forge paths toward a more just world.

Acknowledgement

I believe that, above all, the human relationships we form and their lasting imprint on our lives carry value that cannot be measured by our immediate efforts or outcomes. I owe tremendous gratitude to the people who have infused this effort with meaning, learning and light.

Thank you to...

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My academic advisors, Katharyne Mitchell & Sarah Elwood

My family, Dave, Lydia, and David

My partner, Taylor Lopez

A final ode of gratitude to the 100-year-old building whose legacy our efforts attempt to live up to.



Photo By Jim Cleghorn

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